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Marxism Today

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DISCUSSION:
MONTY JOHNSTONE
LEONARD SCOTT — ON THE GENERAL ELECTION

TOM DURKIN — "MARXISM TODAY" DISCUSSION CIRCLES

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Marxism Today

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The Labour Party and its Constitution

Jack Cohen

DISCUSSIONS on the lessons to be drawn from Labour's defeat at the General Election are raging furiously—and not only in all sections of the Labour movement. "Disinterested friends", like the *Observer* and *The Guardian*, are weeping crocodile tears over the possibility of Tory government for years ahead, offering the Labour Party copious advice as to how to retrieve its electoral fortunes by changing its "image", dropping nationalisation and joining with the Liberals to form a new "radical" left.

The discussion shows that to friend and foe alike, the issues facing the Labour Party are seen as crucial and fundamental to the whole future of the Labour Party as a working class party with socialist aims.

The overall general lessons of the General Election from the Marxist point of view have been dealt with elsewhere.[1] Here it is proposed only to examine the proposals which have been advanced with regard to changing the constitution. Right-wing writers—Johnson, Jay, and others—and the "disinterested friends" mentioned above have argued that the very name "Labour Party", the "socialist aims" embodied in the constitution, the weight of the trade unions in the Labour Party, the way the Executive is elected and the relationship of the Parliamentary Labour Party to it, were among the factors responsible for Labour's defeat, and that if these features are retained, they will constitute almost insuperable obstacles to a future Labour victory.

It would therefore seem useful to examine the Labour Party constitution—how it has evolved, how it has been changed in the past, and in what direction—in order to assess the real significance of the proposals now advanced to change it.

The 1918 Labour Party Conference marked a turning point in the history of the Labour Party. It adopted a new constitution which embodied the socialist aim of common ownership, and it changed the basis of the organisation of the Labour Party. From its formation in 1900 the Labour Party had been a loose federation of trade unions, socialist societies, trades councils and one or two Co-operative Societies. It was not a socialist organisation and no socialist aims appeared in its constitution. Its main object was to secure independent working class representation in Parliament, and this was stated as its aim in the original constitution. This was the purpose for which it had been formed as a result of the famous Plymouth T.U.C. Resolution in 1899, from which the Labour Representation Committee emerged in 1900, taking the name of "Labour Party" in 1906. The formation of the L.R.C. was, of course, a great step forward. It marked the beginning of the end of "Lib-Labism"—the political dependence of the working class on Liberalism—and the rise of an independent working class party in Parliament.

Again and again in all the discussions around the constitution from 1900 to 1918 this aim, or "object" as it was termed, of securing independent working class representation in parliament is repeated. Only in 1911 was the constitution broadened to read under "Object": "to maintain in parliament *and in the country* a political Labour Party" [my italics, J. C.]. What the aims of this political Labour Party were to be were not defined —until 1918. From the Foundation Conference onwards efforts to give a socialist aim to the Labour Party, fought for by the left, had been defeated by the right, although not so easily. Thus at the Foundation Conference, James Macdonald of the Social-Democratic Federation had moved a Resolution which read:

> "That the representatives of the working class movement in the House of Commons shall form there a distinct party, with a party organisation separate from the capitalist parties, based on the recognition of the class war and having for its ultimate object the socialisation of the means of production, distribution and exchange. . . ."

This was defeated by 59 votes to 35. Similarly, in 1903, Jack Jones on behalf of the West Ham Trades Council moved a resolution demanding an "ultimate aim" for the Labour Representation Committee in the following terms:

> "This annual conference . . . hereby declares that its ultimate object shall be the obtaining for

[1] See J. R. Campbell, November *Marxism Today*; John Gollan, *What Next?*; R. P. Dutt, Notes of the Month, *Labour Monthly*, November 1959.

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> the workers the full fruits of their labour by the overthrow of the present competitive capitalist system and the institution of a system of public ownership of all the means of production, distribution and exchange."

On a card vote this was defeated by only 295,000 to 291,000 votes. At the same conference a demand that the L.R.C. formulate a programme was likewise lost.

Thus the right wing was able to defeat proposals for giving class and socialist aims to the Labour Party right from the beginning. This was, of course, in accord with their practice. They supported the Liberal governments in parliament on all the major issues during the period 1906-1914. This collaboration culminated in their most swift and complete support for British imperialism at the outbreak of the First World War, and the entry of Henderson and others into the War Cabinet in 1915.

Background of the 1918 Changes

Why then was the constitution changed in 1918, socialist aims included in it, and a programme, *Labour and the New Social Order* (written by Sidney Webb and stamped in every line with Fabian ideas) adopted? There are a number of reasons.

First and foremost the impact of the imperialist war of 1914-18 and especially of the October 1917 Revolution. These events gave rise to a great wave of anti-capitalist and anti-war feeling, to a great revolutionary upsurge throughout Europe and the world and especially amongst the colonial peoples. It affected Britain too (mutinies in the army, the police strike of 1919, the great support for the Russian Revolution). Had this feeling been ignored it would have swept the right wing out of the leadership and resulted in the advance of new socialist forces in the Labour movement. The right wing could not continue to maintain its hold in the old way, with the old limited aims and policy of unadulterated reformism.

This was seen by Henderson himself in his speech to the 1918 conference supporting the changes in the constitution.

> "It must be obvious to all that this great conflict has created an entirely new situation. Problems of a social and economic character . . . have been aggravated and rendered much more acute. . . . the Executive faced some of these problems and realised that if they were to be dealt with sufficiently drastically to secure remedies . . . *remedies going right down to the roots and almost, if not entirely, demanding a reconstruction of society,* it was first of all essential that we put before the country our own programme and at the same time put our house in order" [my italics—J. C.].

The second consideration was undoubtedly electoral. A general election was due at the end of the war. The Liberals were split, Lloyd George discredited. There was a great wave of revulsion against the old parties and a search for a new, more socially advanced, party. A new Representation of the People Act had been passed which doubled the electorate and gave the vote to 6 million women (those over thirty) for the first time. The Labour leaders saw the opportunity to cash in on these developments and to increase their parliamentary strength considerably.

This then was the background of the famous changes made by the 1918 conference. The "socialist aims" were included in the constitution as Points D and E under a new heading called "Party Objects" (Clause 3). They read:

> "D. To secure for the workers by hand and brain the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry and service.
>
> E. Generally to promote the political, social and economic emancipation of the people, and more particularly of those who depend directly upon their own exertions by hand or by brain."

The other fundamental change in the constitution was the establishment of individual membership. The main basis of the Labour Party remained the affiliated organisations, especially the trade unions. But now individuals could become members of the Labour Party by joining a local Labour Party. Clause 2, "Membership", now read:

> "The Labour Party shall consist of all its affiliated organisations, together with those men and women who are individual members of a local Labour Party and who subscribe to the constitution and programme of the Party."

This change was aimed firstly at transforming the anti-capitalist, anti-war feeling mentioned previously, into membership; and secondly, at creating effective electoral organisation in as many constituencies as possible. The leaders of the Labour Party were aiming to make the Labour Party a "national" party, an alternative to the Liberals and the Tories in the electoral sense, and they needed an organisation which could wage elections efficiently. Previously, electoral activity had been organised in a rather haphazard fashion by the trades councils with the assistance of the socialist societies. Now local and constituency Labour Parties were to be established for this purpose.

This change in the constitution undoubtedly opened the doors of the Labour Party to middle

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class elements who could not have become members before. But the growth of middle class influence in the Labour Party, especially in its leading circles, was not due primarily to this change. This in itself was a logical step, given the whole electoral basis and aims of the Labour Party.

The trade unions remained the main mass basis of the Labour Party. The middle class elements, many of them ex-Liberals, were able to develop their influence because the right wing leaders of both the trade unions and the Labour Party shared their basic outlook.

The 1918 Conference likewise enlarged the Executive to twenty-three members (from fifteen) and strengthened the power of the Executive over the whole Party, with the exception of the Parliamentary Party. While the constitution now stated (Point B, Clause 6): "The national executive shall be responsible for the general work of the Party . . . it shall give effect to the decisions of the Party Conference; and it shall interpret the constitution and standing orders and rules of the Party in all cases of dispute. . . .", Point C merely stated that "the national executive shall *confer* with the Parliamentary Labour Party at the opening of each session". Neither in the 1918 constitution nor anywhere else is it stated explicitly that the Parliamentary Labour Party is subordinate to the Executive of the Party and bound by the decisions of Party conferences.

Socialist Aims Disregarded

The Labour Party was now—on paper—committed to common ownership and to the working class and its allies ("workers by hand and by brain") as its main basis. Its constitution had in many ways been "revised" in a progressive direction. How then explain its subsequent history and record, its position today over forty years after the 1918 conference?

Basically it lies in the whole development of British capitalism and imperialism which was the foundation on which there developed a powerful right wing in the British Labour movement.

This right wing disregarded the "socialist aims". Throughout all these years, on all the major questions facing the working class and its allies, questions having a decisive connection with realisation of the socialist aims—the fight against unemployment, the General Strike, the fight against fascism and war in the 1930's, the policy of the Labour Government of 1945-51, the policy of the Labour leaders from 1951 until today—they pursued a policy of class collaboration, of damping down the class struggle, of saving capitalism from the "workers by hand and by brain".

How could they do this? A discussion of the sources of reformism and the reasons for its strength, of the right wing domination of the Labour Party from its earliest years, lies outside the scope of this article. What is obvious is that the forces of the left were not strong enough to prevent the right from pursuing its anti-working class policy. The reason for this lies in another aspect of the constitution of the Labour Party—using the word this time in its literal sense, how it was made up.

As is well known the unique feature of the Labour Party, differentiating it from most continental Social Democratic Parties, is that it emerged as a federal organisation, and not on the basis of individual membership. This meant that within the framework of one single organisation, trade unions and socialist societies could work together for common objectives. More, it meant that the socialist societies had every possibility of influencing the organisation in a socialist direction. They were allowed to retain their own national and local organisation, to maintain their own press and propaganda activity. They were each represented on the Party Executive and could put forward their members for selection as Labour candidates for parliament and for local government. This was of enormous importance, and represented the possibility of that union of Marxism with the mass working class organisations which Engels had advocated as the prototype of a working class political party in Britain. This federal organisation was also an important basis for the left struggle against the right wing which has been a feature of the Labour Party from its formation.

The socialist societies were the Fabian Society, the Independent Labour Party and the Social Democratic Federation. Of these, only the S.D.F. was Marxist, and it withdrew from the Labour Representation Committee in 1902, considering it too reformist. The British Socialist Party, formed in 1911, and the most important Marxist organisation existing before the formation of the Communist Party, was only granted affiliation in 1916. It remained affiliated until 1920 when it became a major part of the forces which formed the Communist Party.

In order to defeat the right wing leadership of the Labour Party there was needed inside it—especially after 1918—a Marxist party, based on a scientific socialist theory and organised to wage the class struggle to the point of winning political power. The trade unions by their very nature could not provide an alternative, left, socialist force to the right. For though they are organisations of class struggle, this struggle is limited in the main to economic struggle within the framework of

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capitalism, and their members do not share a common political outlook. The I.L.P., although it grew in numbers during, and especially after, the 1914-18 war, was not a real alternative to the right wing, for basically it shared the right wing reformist theory and practice, and some of the most notorious right-wing leaders, MacDonald, Snowden, etc., came from its ranks.

Excluding the Communists

It was with the formation of the Communist Party in 1920 that the basis was created for the waging of an all-round fight against the right wing in the Labour movement and in the Labour Party. And it was with the formation of the Communist Party that changes began to be made in the constitution of the Labour Party which transformed its character.

On its formation the Communist Party applied for affiliation to the Labour Party. This was quite consistent with the character of the Labour Party as an alliance of trade unions and socialist societies, one of which—the Independent Labour Party—had constituted a separate political party from the beginning. The application for affiliation was rejected by the Labour Party Executive and confirmed by the Brighton Conference of the Labour Party in 1921. And it has remained so ever since, despite repeated efforts to alter it.

Realising the role which an affiliated Communist Party would play as the point of attraction for all left forces in the Labour Party and in the trade unions, the right wing leaders proceeded to change the constitution so as to make it impossible for Communists to have any place whatsoever in the Labour Party, or for Labour Party organisations and members to have any official contact with the Communist Party.

The 1924 Labour Party Conference laid it down that no member of the Communist Party could become a Labour candidate for parliament or for the local councils. The Liverpool Conference in 1925 ruled that no member of the Communist Party could be an individual member of the Labour Party through membership of a local Labour Party. (Members of the Communist Party had been individual members of the Labour Party from 1920 to 1925.) The Birmingham conference of 1928 decided that Communists could not be sent as delegates from trade union branches to the Labour Party, either locally or nationally. Along with this there was initiated a whole string of bans, purges and proscriptions. In 1925-6 a large number of local Labour Parties and trades councils were disaffiliated for refusing to apply the 1925 conference decisions. Since then local Labour Parties have been "banned" from associating with an ever increasing number of social, cultural, sport and friendship organisations with socialist countries, all designated by the leadership as being "Communist inspired". This attack on the rights of trade unions and of local Labour Parties was accompanied by an attack on the rights of individual Communists in the trade unions. The T.U.C. issued the "black circular", preventing Communists from being sent as delegates to trades councils. A number of trade unions made it impossible for Communists to be elected to official positions.

Finally, in 1944, the whole traditional character of the Labour Party as "a federation of trade unions and socialist societies" was destroyed. The constitution was changed. A new point was now inserted which stated:

> "Political organisations not affiliated to, or associated under a national agreement with the Party on January 1st, 1946, having their own Programme, Principles and Policy for distinctive and separate propaganda, or possessing branches in the constituencies, or engaged in the promotion of parliamentary or local government candidates, or owing allegiance to any political organisation situated abroad, shall be ineligible for affiliation to the Labour Party."

These provisions would have disqualified all the original socialist societies which helped to form the Labour Party—the I.L.P., the S.D.F., the Fabian Society—for all of them undertook some or all of these activities.

The aim of this change was clear. It was to prevent the possibility of the affiliation of the Communist Party to the Labour Party for all time.

This narrative of events has been necessary in order to put the proposals now being advanced to change the Labour Party's constitution still further, into their proper perspective. The recent changes in the Labour Party constitution removed it further and further away from the kind of organisation established by those who founded it. The new proposals aim to transform it into something quite different in every respect.

All that remains of the Labour Party, as it was conceived by its founders, all that remains of the 1918 constitution, are: the name, the "socialist aims" inserted in 1918, and the special place of the trade unions within the Labour Party. Now the right wing wish to eliminate even these as "outdated obstacles". The formation of the L.R.C. was an *advance* from Liberalism, no matter how limited and partial. The present proposals of Jay and his supporters

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would, in effect, mean a return to Liberalism, but Liberalism disguised as and embodied in what is today the Labour Party.

That is why the proposals to "drop nationalisation", to "change the name", to alter the place of the unions in the structure of the Labour Party, to strengthen the powers of the leader, must be fought. This does not mean simply fighting for a reversion to the pre-1959 election position, with the right wing dominant, with the "socialist aims" mere words flouted and disregarded by the leadership, with the trade unions on the whole constituting a big support for the right wing.

It does not mean simply the rejection of the policies of the Jays and of the crude exponents of right wing policy—while retaining Gaitskell and the other "New Thinkers" as leaders.

Position of the Trade Unions

The retention of the place and power of the trade unions in the Labour Party, in its leadership and in policy formation, is of the greatest importance. The right wing are working for the situation where the trade unions are relegated to the position of "milch cow" with no say in policy or in leadership. The association of the trade unions with the Labour Party is what gives it its basis in the working class, stamps it as a Party of the working class. But this association also provides the trade unions with the means for ensuring a working class policy for the Labour Party, since the trade unions are the decisive force of the Labour Party—numerically, electorally, financially. At December 31st, 1958, of the total Labour Party membership of 6,542,156, no fewer than 5,627,690 were affiliated through the trade unions.

In view of their position in the Labour Party the trade unions can play a decisive part in building up an alliance with those in the local Labour Parties who desire a genuine socialist policy. The trade unions, if they use their strength in the Labour Party, can help to defeat right-wing policies.

It is because the right wing rightly fear that the trade unions are now beginning to assert themselves in the Labour Party in a progressive sense (the T.G.W.U. and the bomb), and because the grip of the right wing is being weakened in a number of trade unions, that they are working for the weakening of the position of the trade unions in the Labour Party. It is this which explains their charges about the Labour Party being "the prisoner" of the trade unions.

Similarly, the proposals to change the nature of the Executive, limit the representation of the constituency parties in the Executive, to give greater power to the Parliamentary Labour Party and to the "Leader," are all aimed to remove the last small shreds of democratic control by the local parties, the Party Conference and the Executive over the Parliamentary Labour Party, and especially over the Prime Minister and Cabinet of a future Labour Government.

Already the authority of these bodies is meagre enough. The Parliamentary Labour Party is "a state within a state." It has frequently violated Labour Party Conference decisions (its attitude to the proposals for the future of Cyprus is only one of a large number of instances). Within this "state within a state" there is another, even narrower state—the Shadow Cabinet when Labour is in opposition, and the Prime Minister and the Cabinet when Labour is in office. The Party Executive and the Party Conference have no real control over these bodies and certainly had no control over the composition of the two post-war Labour Cabinets or of the policy pursued by the two Labour Governments.

> "Throughout Attlee's six years of office there were . . . regular and frequent consultations between the Government and the National Executive, but there is not the slightest indication that the Executive controlled the affairs of either of Attlee's Governments . . . the members of the Labour Party were left in no doubt about the fact that the Prime Minister and Cabinet could not share responsibility with the Party organisation outside parliament . . . the policies of the Government were not in any sense determined by a majority decision of the Parliamentary Labour Party any more than they were governed by the decisions of the Executive Committee or Annual Conference. Once he had become Prime Minister, Attlee's relations to his followers inside parliament and outside were almost identical with those of a Conservative or Liberal Prime Minister. Common sense dictated that he should take account of their views . . . but the illusion harboured by some . . . that a Labour leader, when he became Prime Minister, would be primarily a mouthpiece for the Parliamentary Labour Party and for the movement outside parliament came to nothing."
>
> (R. T. Mackenzie, *British Political Parties*, pp. 333-4.)

It is this which must be changed, and the Parliamentary Labour Party, the Shadow Cabinet, and any future Labour Cabinet and Government brought under the control of the Party and of the Party Conference. Control of the Labour members in parliament was regarded as of the

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greatest importance when the Labour Party was first founded, and provisions to this end are to be found in the early constitutions.

Thus, in the revised constitution adopted by the 1903 conference it is stated under *IV. Duties of the Executive*:

> "It shall report to affiliated organisations . . . if any members of this Executive, *Members of Parliament, or candidates who have been endorsed by this committee, act contrary to the spirit of this constitution.*" [My emphasis, J.C.]

This clause remained in the constitution until 1911, when it was watered down to read as a Point under the same heading: "To take all necessary steps to maintain this constitution." This formula remained in the constitution until 1918, when it was eliminated entirely in the new constitution that was adopted.

There are other decisive aspects in which advances need to be made. The whole story of changes in the Labour Party constitution—those made in the past, and those proposed now—emphasises that in the main these changes have assisted to steer the Labour Party to the right, to strengthen the grip of the right wing in the Labour Party. Part of the battle to defeat the assault now being made on the very nature of the Labour Party is to fight to end the bans and proscriptions.

Unity of the Left

In 1918 the Labour Party was compelled to recognise the socialist aspirations of large sections of the British working class. For over forty years these aspirations have been betrayed. It is time to raise the question—"What are working class politics about?" For nearly sixty years the right wing have declared that the path to socialism lies simply through the election of a Labour Government. Majority Labour Governments have come and have gone, and socialism is as remote from Britain as ever. Experience has shown that the right-wing view is false, as the Marxists always asserted.

The path to socialism lies through the conquest of working class power, as the position in one-third of the world demonstrates today so clearly. Working class power is not to be got without all-sided class struggle, not only the electoral struggle. The right wing recipes for painless, easy transition to socialism have all proved to be illusory. Because the right wing leaders were unwilling to seize the great opportunities for making deep inroads into capitalism in 1945, and because of their policy of class collaboration and the abandonment of socialism ever since, it will be harder, not easier, to advance to socialism. If the right wing have their way with the Labour Party now it will be harder still.

The task of the hour, therefore, is to unite all the left forces in the Labour movement to defeat the new attack, to strengthen all those in the Labour movement who consider its function to be to fight for independent working class policies and to organise the struggle for socialism. Vital to the success of this struggle is the unity of these forces with the Communist Party, the party recognised even by its enemies as being devoted to the consistent struggle for socialism.

> "It is easy to respect those devout socialists who believe that there is something wrong with the whole basis of our society, with its emphasis on money making and competition, and that this can be cured only by re-organising society completely on socialist lines. This at least is a clear and consistent political principle, even though it seems probable that it could be achieved only by Communist methods" (*Observer*, November 8th, 1959).

The strengthening of the Communist Party is not only decisive for the fight against the attacks now being made on the Labour Party, but is the real guarantee that the British working class will achieve "the political, social and economic emancipation of the people, and more particularly of those who depend directly upon their own exertions by hand or by brain."

The Editorial Board of "Marxism Today" is making a general review of the contents of numbers so far issued, contributors, and the way in which various subjects have been handled, in order to prepare a report and make recommendations to the Executive Committee of the Communist Party for the future development of the journal.

The Editorial Board will particularly welcome comments from readers on past numbers and proposed subjects to be dealt with in future numbers, together with any other suggestions which can help to make "Marxism Today" more useful as the theoretical and discussion journal of the Communist Party.

Letters should be addressed to: The Editor, "Marxism Today", 16 King Street, London, W.C.2.

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Wildcats, Tame Tabbies and Strikes

J. R. Campbell

IF one took the capitalist press seriously, which one must never do, Britain is the most strike-prone country in the world. Millions of working days are lost in official, or worse still, unofficial strikes. British industry is reeling under the cruel blows inflicted upon it by its own workers, who do not work with the discipline or the devotion which the workers in other countries are alleged to do.

Like most of the stunts started by the press this has very little basis indeed. Compared with other countries Britain is comparatively free from strikes—too free in fact. Last year less than 3½ million working days were lost (about 2 million in the official London Transport strike). This total amounts to a loss of about *two hours per annum*, amongst the workers in the main industries of the country (excepting clerical and administrative workers in local and national government). This year, so far, fewer workers have been involved in strikes than last year—385,100 to 463,000. The number of working days lost is 4,747,000 or about 2½ hours per annum, in the main industries. Again the principal loss of working days is 3½ million due to the justifiable official strike in the printing industry. The motor industry is supposed to be an example of a desperately strike-prone industry. Even if we attribute all the strikes classified by the Ministry of Labour under "vehicles" to the manufacture of cars and accessories, it amounts to no more than six hours per worker in the first eight months of the year.

Compare this with the 58 million days already lost by the American steel strike with about the same number of workers, and one can see the desperately slender foundation on which the latest press stunt is erected. It may be that the editors who organise such stunts are devotees of "work for work's sake", hence their grief and pain at even the spectacle of a single working day being lost. In that case we invite these editors to give prior attention to people, fit and able to work, who live on unearned income, or live by their wits at the expense of people living on unearned income. If the press were really concerned with working days lost it would start a campaign against those people, who carefully avoid doing a useful spot of work at any time.

Why this Stunt?

The stunt is directed primarily against the wages movement, in which the workers are claiming a share in the much boosted "prosperity" of the country. It helps to create a prejudice against any strike which may take place, and against the Labour Party, which is associated with the unions. And it implants in the minds of right-wing trade union leaders the fear that if they don't hold the workers back from striking some form of anti-trade union legislation may be introduced.

Instead of counter-attacking, the right-wing Labour leadership runs away and turns its attention to devising ways and means of restraining the workers from striking, either officially or unofficially.

Yet what opportunity for a counter-attack exists. The Tory Party proclaims that "Conservative [i.e. capitalist] freedom works". There are no restrictions and no controls. Everyone is allowed to grab what he can in the way of profits. If a capitalist monopoly controls any commodity or commodities it is entitled to get the highest possible price for them. But immediately the workers try to get the highest price possible for the commodity they control, namely their labour power, they are denounced as wrecking the country's prosperity. The "free for all" is for big business, but not for the workers, who are expected to exercise restraint in all they do. A fighting workers' party could pour devastating ridicule on this doctrine, but the Labour Party and the right-wing union bureaucracy maintain a cowardly silence and wonder what the Gallup polls will register.

Why Strikes?

Karl Marx long ago pointed out that the struggle of the workers around wages and hours usually occurs as a result of changes in the development of the country.

> "In all the cases I have considered, and they form ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, you have seen that a struggle for a rise of wages

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> follows only in the track of *previous* changes, and is the necessary offspring of previous changes in the amount of production, the productive powers of labour, the value of labour, the value of money, the extent or the intensity of labour extracted, the fluctuation of market prices, dependent on the fluctuations of supply and demand, and consistent with the different phases of the industrial cycle, in one word as the reactions of labour against the previous action of capital" (*Value, Price and Profit*).

This has been particularly evident in the post-war situation in Britain. The workers had to fight against the inflation that was the immediate result of the "2 per cent war", they had to offset the consequences of the Tories' abolition of food and housing subsidies, of food controls, their relaxation of rent controls. They had to resist all attempts at imposing degrading work, shop discipline; at reducing the worker to a mere appendage of the conveyor belt; they had to restrain the time and motion "experts"; they had to fight for a share of their increased productivity. The prosperity of the workers has been grossly exaggerated. There are considerable sections whom it has passed by, but such as it is, it has been achieved by the continuous pressure of the unions. Think what the situation of the mass of the workers would have been had the various tendencies above listed not been offset by action or the threat of action.

But it could be objected that persuasion and pressure is one thing and strikes are another. Not so. Persuasion and pressure will only be effective if behind them there is the possibility that the workers will withdraw their labour; collective bargaining is real, because in the background is the fact that if the workers and the unions are not satisfied they can withdraw the commodity they control, their labour power, from the industries until they can get better terms. In every major negotiation the employers' representatives are testing out how far the unions are prepared to go. They fix any offer they make in negotiation far below the level that they could afford. Their standard is not "What can we really afford?" but "How small is the amount that we can bluff the unions into accepting?" or even "Will the unions act if we refuse them any increase whatever?" Before any real negotiations can take place for all the industries, some road blocks set up by the employers have got to be removed. It was so in the engineering and shipbuilding disputes of 1957, in which 6 million working days were lost, in the London bus dispute of 1958 in which about 2 million were lost and in the print dispute of 1959 in which $3\frac{1}{2}$ million days were lost. Since 1957 there has been the tendency of the employers to call the bluff of any union or group of unions which they believe is operating on a vital part of the wages front. The unions are offered the alternative of capitulating and accepting a totally derisory offer or of fighting, for capitulation can often have the most disastrous consequences for the future.

Meaning of Arbitration

The situation is not altered when it becomes a question of arbitration. The chairman of the average arbitration tribunal has all the prejudices of the average middle-class man, and is apt to take the official view—exemplified in the various reports of the Cohen Committee in recent years—about the general economic situation. This general attitude is to arrive at an award that will give rise to a lot of trade union grumbling but will fall short of provoking a strike. If employers or arbiters could only be sure that the workers would always accept their offers or rewards, then they would concede much less than they do today. To frown on strikes is therefore to frown on actions absolutely essential to raising the standard of life.

If the employers are going to pick out some union or group of unions every year, in order to stage a major conflict, then the importance of trade union solidarity becomes much greater than ever before. This means not merely financial assistance to the striking unions on a much more substantial scale than before, it also means sympathetic industrial action by other unions. The right-wing trade union bureaucracy declares that such sympathetic action will raise political issues and that the Government may intervene. They forget that the Government has intervened in a big way already. It has appointed semi-official committees like the Cohen Committee. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has repeatedly told the employers what the general line of the Government is with regard to wage increases.

In his speech on the Budget Debate (November 3rd, 1959) he laid down the priorities for the employers. Priority number one was to put export business first "whether that is immediately the most profitable case or not". Priority number two is "to use any increases in profits for two purposes: for the strengthening of their business for still more efficient production, and for reduction in prices to their customers". So although the increase in profits comes from the increased productivity of the workers, the Government line is that wage increases come last.

We must not forget the Government's advice to the employers in 1957, to resist the engineering wages demand. So the Government is already in on wage determination in a big way, and the unions must be prepared to throw their weight

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on the other side of the scale. When the press or the right-wing leaders talk about strikes causing inconvenience to the public they forget that the workers are the majority of the public, and if any group of workers is inconvenienced by a strike, let them reflect that they would be inconvenienced a lot more if the unions had not succeeded in pushing up money wages and earnings, and to a lesser extent, real wages and earnings in the post-war period.

The strikes that have lost working days have been in the main official strikes. They have been justifiable strikes and so long as there is a society in which one class has to sell its labour power to another, such strikes are indispensable if the workers are to defend their living standards.

Unofficial Strikes

What of unofficial strikes? Why can't the workers use the union machinery all the time?

There is no simple pattern of unofficial strikes. Take the case of a small or medium-sized factory in the Midlands, manufacturing accessories for the motor industry. The workers in such a factory are painfully aware that their wages are much below the level of those prevailing in the great motor factories. There may only be a comparatively few trade unionists in such a factory. Suppose a dispute breaks out over piecework, or over the victimisation of a worker. The minority of trade unionists encourage the workers to strike, with the result not only that the pay dispute is settled for the time being but that a basis is created for building the unions in the factory. In hundreds of cases such unofficial strikes have led to the building of organisation.

Or take some new issue arising in a field in which there is no firm agreement between the unions and the employers. Such were the disputes at Standards and the B.M.C. on the question of redundancy. The workers in Standards had to act to get an agreement, or find the question resolved for them, by mass dismissals. To accept dismissals or strike was the option presented to them. This strike touched off the much bigger dispute at the British Motor Corporation. The Standard workers were in the main defeated. The B.M.C. won a partial victory, but the long run effect of both disputes was to stimulate trade union recruitment on a massive scale. What started as an unofficial dispute became a very big union-building factor.

The whole of trade union history is littered with instances of where unofficial strikes have led to the building of strong trade union organisation.

Defending the Stewards

Many cases of unofficial strikes arise out of the efforts of workers to defend their trade union factory organisation, their shop stewards committees. Managements who feel that a committee is restraining their power to fix piecework prices at the level they desire, or is hampering their power to dismiss workers, may decide on a showdown. They may provoke some incident, and hey presto! the convenor or some important shop steward is dismissed. If the workers go through procedure the negotiations at workshop, district or national level will drag out interminably. In the end the employers will almost certainly fail to agree and the union will have the option of striking. This option is rarely ever exercised. The dismissed worker is given victimisation benefit, and the workshop organisation has in some cases received a blow from which it will not easily recover. No doubt better arrangements for negotiating on dismissals can ultimately be wrested from the employers, but in the meantime it is precisely on such questions that the employers are the most recalcitrant.

The alternative to going through the farce of procedure is for the workers to take direct action every time a shop steward is dismissed, in other words to make such dismissals as costly as possible for the employers. This is in general a much more effective protection to the shop stewards and is of the utmost service to the union because it preserves the workshop organisation, which is the most potent instrument for trade union recruitment.

Fixing the Prices

Perhaps the most important function of the shop stewards is to influence the negotiation of piece-work prices and times on the workshop floor. This type of negotiation is of the utmost value in industries where piece-rates are the rule and where technical change is taking place. When a new type of job comes forward there is usually an agreement reached by the workers about the prices they will ask the rate-fixer to concede. In innumerable cases a price is conceded which is acceptable to both sides and there the matter ends for the time being. If the negotiations are proving to be too sticky the shop stewards will intervene in an endeavour to get a settlement. If their efforts are successful the matter ends there. If the employers are stalling for a considerable time, often because they want to see how far the workers will go, a threat of a strike or a short sharp strike may induce them to offer terms which are acceptable. There is, of course, a procedure for taking such questions up to a central conference, in the engineering industry, but months can be wasted in this way. The best method is to

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settle it with the firm, even if a strike is occasionally imperative.

What does this really involve? According to the latest returns the average earnings in the engineering and the electrical industries are £13 15s. 9d. per week for male workers. This is far above the *minimum* that has been established by national negotiations. A fitter in the Birmingham area on the basis of the trade union agreement has a basic weekly wage rate for piecework of 66s. per week. His "bonus or basis times" are supposed to be fixed at a level which will enable a man of average ability to earn at least 45 per cent over his basic weekly wage rate. In addition to this he is entitled to about 2s. 4d. an hour for every hour worked. On these *minimum* conditions he would receive slightly less than £10 per week. In fact, however, in most cases he will be able to earn between £12 and £14 per week. In motors he may earn between £16 and £18. Some of the difference is accounted for by overtime, but a lot is accounted for by the fact that the "bonus or basis times" have been negotiated at a level which enables the average worker to earn more than the minimum 45 per cent on his basic rate. These results are frequently obtained by the solidarity of the workers and the strength of the shop stewards movement.

The Prosperous Firms

In the engineering industry there is a terrific disparity between the efficiency of the various firms and the productivity of the workers who are employed in them. Nationally negotiated rates and conditions are apt to be based on the notion of the average firm and its ability to pay (some engineering workers would say on firms which are below the average): firms whose efficiency is above the average would, in workshop parlance, be "getting away with murder" if they only paid the minimum called for in national negotiations. The battle around piecework prices and times on the workshop floor at least extracts from such firms something additional in the way of earnings. Sometimes it extracts from the employers some fringe benefits—a pension scheme or a sick pay scheme—often put forward in an effort to undermine the influence of the shop stewards with the workers. The employers know that to weaken the shop stewards and to circumscribe their influence will lessen the necessity to grant concessions on earnings. So union leaders who seek to limit the actions of the stewards are in fact seeking to diminish the pressure on the employers to concede increased earnings.

There is another type of unofficial strike which is sometimes resorted to, not in the hope of winning any benefits directly from the employers but in the hope of speeding up long-drawn-out negotiations in which the union is engaged. The British Oxygen drivers' strike, which took place during the General Election, was a protest against prolonged negotiations. A few days after they returned to work a wage award of 13s. per week was announced. It is alleged that the meeting which agreed to the award was fixed before the strike anyhow and that the strike advanced nothing. We may be forgiven if we doubt this. There was an inordinate delay in making this award, and after a powerful unofficial strike the award was forthcoming.

However, the aftermath of this strike raises a question of vital principle. The majority of the workers who were on strike were members of the Transport and General Workers' Union, which refused to endorse the strike and ordered the men back to work. There the matter appears to rest as far as this union is concerned. But a minority of the workers belonged to the General and Municipal Workers' Union, whose district committee promptly proceeded to suspend them, 112 in all, from union membership for a period of six months. Two shop stewards were removed from their positions. This raises a very important question indeed. It goes without saying that not every unofficial strike will be endorsed by a trade union executive. It is one thing, however, for an executive to say that a strike is unwise and unconstitutional and that it is not prepared to endorse it and pay strike pay. But it is a vastly different thing and a most sinister development for an executive or a district committee to proceed to punish workers who have participated in an unofficial strike.

It is necessary to tell executives and district committees who behave in such a fashion that they are becoming too big for their boots. A trade union is an association for improving the conditions of the working class. It must not become an organisation for disciplining the working class in the interests of the employers, even when an agreement is being challenged (which does not appear to have been the case in the British Oxygen dispute). We are certain that the mass of the workers will oppose such an arbitrary exercise of power by any union executive.

The General and Municipal Workers would be doing something to forestall unofficial strikes if it raised the desperately poor wages of workers in the local government services for which it

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caters. The highest rate for male manual workers in these services in the London area is £9 18s. 10d. per week. Average earnings of male manual workers for the country as a whole are £10 3s. 5d. Any union which tolerates such standards is asking for unofficial strikes, for it is in raising such miserable wages and not in punishing unofficial strikers that its duty lies.

A Better Way

A much different attitude was displayed by the executive committee of the National Union of Railwaymen in relation to the unofficial strike of restaurant car staff. These workers were, in a way, striking against an agreement which had just been negotiated, and the executive could have been under temptation to assume a hoity-toity attitude and order the men back to work before it was prepared to discuss with them. Instead the executive discussed the issues with the strike leadership for the best part of a day, and promised them that as soon as there was a return to work negotiations would be started for the removal of their grievances. That is now being done. No doubt if this executive had flourished the rule book, refused to meet the men's representatives and ordered the strikers back to work the capitalist press would have praised their "strong" attitude. But a display of bureaucratic toughness towards the workers and servility to the employers is not strength but treacherous weakness. An attitude like that of the N.U.R. executive, treating its members as men with a grievance and not a pack of "wild-cats", was a real display of strength from a working class point of view.

There is, of course, no magic in unofficial strikes. If permanent agreements are to be established this can only be done through the unions. But there are still occasions when unofficial strikes can serve a limited but useful purpose, and only the interests of the employers would be served if either the Government or the employers sought to prevent them taking place.

Keeping them Apart

The right-wing trade union bureaucracy are not only opposing unofficial actions. They are even opposing unofficial discussions and consultations amongst shop stewards. The executive of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, for example, banned a shop stewards' conference which was to be held in Sheffield on December 6th to discuss ways and means of mobilising the support of engineering workers for the official claims for increased wages and the forty-hour week. No official campaign is being organised and the executive could not claim that the shop stewards would cut across union activities. They evidently prefer no campaign at all; a quiet life and the acceptance of whatever miserable offer the Employers' Federation makes, appears to be their line. Naturally the General and Municipal Workers had to proclaim a ban also. The A.E.U. executive also sought to prevent the aircraft stewards from getting together to discuss further steps in the fight against redundancy. There is no suggestion that the A.E.U. executive wanted to lead such a fight, rather than allow the shop stewards to do so. Again, it only wanted a quiet life. If this type of interfering is tolerated the next step will be for the executive to proceed against the Combine Committees which bring together the shop stewards in the various factories belonging to a single firm for consultation. It could happen that such firms introduce some new machine or process into the factory that is the most weakly organised, and then having fixed terms there, endeavour to introduce the new machine on these terms in the other factories. It could also happen in the event of a dispute (official or unofficial) that work could be transferred from one factory to another. It is therefore essential that the shop stewards' committees within the frontiers of a given firm should be encouraged to form a Combine Committee, where they can exchange information and to some extent co-ordinate policy with regard to the firm. Such committees fill a gap and should be regarded as non-official rather than unofficial. There is no case for interfering with them. Indeed, they could be important factors in union building and should be encouraged to meet under union (i.e., Confederation) auspices.

Stewards and Branches

Interference with the activities of shop stewards is suicidal from the point of view of the vital interests of the union. The democratic life of many unions, from the point of view of branch attendance and general membership participation in the life of the union, is very low indeed. Every manifestation of democratic activity amongst the workers in the factory should therefore be encouraged because it revives interest in union affairs.

The stewards and all the active workers who support them should, however, understand that they would be in less danger of attack from

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right-wing leadership if they had established a stronger link between themselves and the union branches and district committees. The best militants must be assiduous in attending their union branches and winning them for a progressive policy, which would reflect itself in the district committees and the national conferences of the unions. If this were done the danger of a cleavage between the union apparatus and the shop stewards could be avoided. On this basis the stewards could be the link between the mass of the workers and the union executive and district committees. They could be used to transmit the latest information about union policy, wage claims, etc., to the workers. They could mobilise the workers behind any wage drive that the union was making and bring rank and file and officers closer together. They could make it impossible for the right wing, acting under the instructions and pressure of the capitalist press, to undermine democracy in the unions or to circumscribe the workshop struggles which are the basis of all healthy trade union growth; they could combat the right-wing theories and policies, which enfeeble the union, as a fighting working class instrument.

The unions are in danger at this moment of the "enemy within", i.e., those right-wing leaders who make it their main business to transmit capitalist policy into the union. Given the weakening or the elimination of the influence of these people, given unity between the shop committees and trade union branches, and the election of progressives to leading posts, the unions will soon build up the power to smash the machinations of the class "enemy from without".

Social Factors in Modern Medicine

Robin Williamson

WHEN one has been asked to write an article on such a subject as this, with only the most general terms of reference, one is tempted at first to draw up terms of reference for oneself by defining the words used in the title. Shortly, however, one finds that this in itself is not only difficult and hazardous but also tedious; whereas the title given appears in the beginning at least to be quite stimulating. I propose to assume then that we all agree about what the subject means. Nevertheless experience shows that as soon as I start I shall say something with which somebody will disagree violently; which we should all know by now is bound to happen to anybody who says or does anything about anything.

Surely it must be agreed by all that the biggest and most important social factor in modern medicine has been the growth of science. This growth, and the development of new means of production, and the interpenetration of these two processes, have brought men into new social relations with one another. The subsequent and consequent growth of medical science has made it possible to investigate illness, and to treat it, in entirely new ways. These have entailed the development of new relations between doctors and their patients. No better example of this could well be given than that shown in a film (about general medical practice) recently produced by the Medical Practitioners' Union. We see a family doctor, towards the end of last century, sitting till dawn at the bedside of a child with lobar pneumonia. (The scene is a re-creation of a well-known picture of those days). The crisis comes, and passes; the fever subsides; the doctor rises and leaves, the parents having expressed as best they can the gratitude they feel. Next we see an almost identical room, with anxious parents by the bed of the sick child. But there is no doctor. Instead, when the child's recovery begins, the father handles with grateful admiration the bottle of "wonder drug" now seen lying on a table near the bed.

This is of course only one of a number of such changes that can be brought to mind. What they all epitomise is not simply new doctor-patient relationships, however, but new relations between people and external Nature. The new idea is that men have now found things that can be done in particular diseases, which are the correct things for each particular disease, and are known to be so not just by trial and error but because the physical and

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chemical and physiological processes involved are understood; and not only the physiology of men but also the physiology of bacteria. Fleming's discovery of penicillin led not only to the conquest of certain diseases but also to the successful investigation of many of the processes by which bacteria live. This facilitates the search for other antibiotics, of which there are now quite a number. And one might very well think of the doctor as an agent for the complex apparatus which has the job of identifying and supplying the right antibiotic for the patient with bacterial disease.

Complex Relations

The whole thing seems to me to emphasise the analogy already indicated between production and medicine. Both are becoming not only more scientific but also more social. Ordinary modern life is inconceivable without the extraordinary complex of labour and production relations that we know, and modern medicine is a matter not only of the doctor-patient relationship but also of relations between the patient and the laboratory with its pathologists and technicians, between the patient and the pharmacy and the pharmacists and the drug manufacturers, not to mention the patient and the nurses and the patient and the various organs of the state.

Our ideas about society have changed—as is well known!—during the last hundred years. Socialist production relations have been instituted in the Soviet Union, and with prodigious success. Socialist ideas have become current throughout most of the world. These are ideas about men's relations to one another and to the world about them.

Similarly, and in clear relation to these more general ideas, ideas about medicine and health and illness would be expected to change, and have in fact changed. We should probably distinguish here between the views of the public generally, especially the views of the Labour movement, on the one hand, and the views of the medical profession on the other. The necessity for a health service was seen in the Labour movement in the early part of this century, and probably before. The height of the campaign for a health service was reached in the 1930's. The medical profession, however, has only become convinced of the value of a health service as a result of more or less having to work in one.

This change of heart came late, but it has come to stay. The contrast with the time when the service was about to be introduced is very marked. Then, the apprehensions of the doctors, at first rather diffuse, crystallised around the question of pay. The leadership of the British Medical Association managed to get a large number of doctors to say they would not join the service unless their conditions were met. They were met; and, with much misgiving, the doctors joined.

About three years ago, the profession and the Government (now a Tory one) having fallen out again over pay, the B.M.A. leadership tried again, this time to get the doctors to withdraw from the service. Meetings were held all up and down the country. The discussions were generally serious and calm. Nobody who attended them could fail to note the rift that had developed between the so-called leadership and the rank and file. The great majority of doctors had obviously got used to the service, had come to value it, and had determined to carry it on and make it work. They were not by any means satisfied with it; they found plenty to criticise; but they could not see it being replaced by the sort of alternative being proposed by the B.M.A. for the areas where withdrawal would be operated. Any satisfactory alternative would be too complex for the B.M.A. to run it, and too costly for the patients who would have to pay for it.

The viewpoints then expressed have been repeated over and over again during the subsequent years, while the dispute over pay has gone on. It has become more and more clear, from annual meetings as well as *ad hoc* conferences and discussions, that the overwhelming majority of doctors intend to stay in the National Health Service, to improve it as and when the opportunity offers or necessity demands, and to do their work as well as they can within that framework.

It is, I think, very difficult to know in what measure this change of heart should be attributed to a more altruistic attitude on the part of doctors generally. Many speakers in the discussions emphasised the duties of the profession to their patients, in a sense hostile to the proposals of the B.M.A. leadership. But others were heard—by no means so many—who took a narrower and more selfish view. It is surely very difficult, perhaps impossible, to discuss such matters in a quantitative way. The necessary information is not available. In any case, common experience suggests that some doctors have always thought one way and some another.

Ten Years' Experience

Something new has happened, however, namely that the medical profession as a whole has worked for ten years and more in the National Health Service. The discussions and debates preliminary to its establishment, and equally so those consequent upon its operation, have for probably the first time obliged almost all doctors at one moment to examine the medical needs of the nation as a whole. Then the actual work in the service; the needs of the patients of such varying ages and circumstances; their presenting themselves to the doctors, and the doctors' being able to meet their needs through this complex and remarkably comprehensive service, without having to worry about the patients' means;

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the increasing trend towards various forms of co-operative working among doctors, so that single-handed practice has dwindled sharply; the realisation by doctors that modern scientific medicine cannot be practised apart from a large organisation; the associated conclusion that modern scientific medicine cannot be dispensed by one man to three or four thousand patients, and that "lists" must be cut, and cut again; these and similar experiences and conclusions certainly have done much to "change the climate of professional opinion".

It should not be thought that all doctors will agree with everything set out in the preceding paragraph. Probably, indeed, it would not be difficult to find some doctors who disagreed with them all, and it would be easy to find doctors who disagreed with one or other of the points. But it is reasonable to claim that they indicate a trend which is genuinely there. Indeed, one might support that claim by recalling that the profession as a whole was displeased when charges for prescriptions were introduced, and even more displeased when later on they were increased. This surely does as much as anything to prove that most doctors are convinced of the necessity of a health service "free at the time of use"; a matter of which most of them were anything but certain ten years ago.

What a contrast one may observe here between the position of the British medical profession and that of the American! There, when there is any talk of a publicly provided health service, it seems as if the most dreadful subversion were being proposed. The air is rent by screams of "Tyranny!" and "Communism!" and the like. Yet it cannot be denied that serious illness has brought financial ruin to many American families; for the best treatment can only be bought. If you cannot pay, or are not insured, you do not get it. It must be said that if you can pay you certainly get the tops in treatment. But you certainly pay the tops for the treatment.

I wonder if there exists in America a differentiation between the most vocal and influential doctors on the one hand, and the bulk of the profession on the other, such as we have found to exist in this country? It could well be; though perhaps progressive views are not held as yet by the "bulk" of the American doctors. Yet it is certain that progressive ideas are not unknown in America, and are indeed dearly held and worthily defended. Every advance we can make in our health service must encourage and strengthen those American doctors, and those American people generally, who wish to see something similar in their own land. And the same goes, of course, for France and other countries.

Likewise we here would do well to consider the situation in the U.S.S.R., where by an apparent anomaly patients are expected to pay for some of the cheaper drugs. There, on the other hand, the individual pays no personal contribution towards the cost of the health service, as we do here. Personally I think we should aim at abolishing all payments of whatever sort. It is a thousand pities that the Tories have won the General Election, if only because these charges will be continued and possibly increased.

The Question of Finance

On the question of finance, it is not generally realised that in Britain these personal payments amount to 15% (in round figures) of the total cost of the National Health Service, about 5% being paid by patients in the form of charges imposed "at the time of use". This may seem no very great proportion, but it must be remembered that these payments are being made by the patients at a time when their earnings are reduced. It is in any case a serious infringement of a basic principle of the health service as seen by every Socialist, not to mention Lord Beveridge. (Readers will remember that the health service constituted "Assumption B" of his social security plan.) One might say that the imposition of these charges has re-introduced an old difficulty that often reared itself between doctor and patient—the question "Can you pay?" Some of today's doctors have never had to think about that, until the charges led them to prescribe extraordinary quantities of drugs and dressings so as to reduce the cost to their patients.

Such considerations are irrelevant to the matter in hand between doctor and patient. They cannot be too quickly left behind.

The question of the cost of drugs has another and more complicated side. Here the question is of the production of the drugs, therapeutic agents, appliances and so on. The social factors here are those of need, of use, and of profit; and the greatest of these is profit. It is nothing less than staggering to compare the price charged by a firm, when it first and exclusively brings out a new product, with the price charged by that same firm and its competitors after a period of reciprocal price-cutting. The price may start at something like £6 per 1,000, fall during the competitive phase to £1, and settle by agreement at 30s., at which level we may be sure it is still making a comfortable profit.

It must be obvious on a moment's consideration that the National Health Service has been most beneficial to the drug manufacturers. A system whereby the entire population is made their customers can hardly be otherwise. And the scale of their profits is emphasised by the inexhaustible stream of lush, glossy advertisements which pours daily through the letter-boxes of the doctors. But that is only part of a not altogether healthy state of affairs.

The flood of advertising (and samples) delivered

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through the post is probably only a fraction of that which appears in the medical journals by the week or month. (Let it be remembered we are speaking here only of the "ethical" drug trade, not the "patent" medicines). Not only are there many pages of advertisements in the journals. Many medical conferences are subsidised by the exhibits and displays of the drug manufacturers. In fact it is certain that, were they deprived of this support, the majority of medical journals and conferences would be extremely curtailed and probably come to a complete stop.

That is to say that the major means of communication of new ideas and new discoveries, the major means of discussion, the major channels of controversy and polemic, to and from and among the medical profession, are practically speaking in pawn to the drug manufacturers. What would happen if the annual representative meeting of the British Medical Association were to consider a resolution calling for nationalisation of the drug industry? What would happen if it were to pass such a resolution?

Now it need not be thought that under present arrangements the drug manufacturers bring any pressure to bear on the medical organisations, or do anything improper in this connection at all. It is true to say, on the contrary, that some of them finance projects by medical organisations, from which they certainly make no profit and gain very little publicity. But it becomes apparent that as things are no medical organisation could very well be expected to urge that the drug industry be nationalised. What is more, any political organisation that wants the drug industry to be nationalised has to think out some way of financing the medical journals and organisations either from the nationalised industry or from the funds of the central government or in some other way. Probably the first method would be the best, as being the least departure from present ways—"better the devil you know". But without doubt something would have to be done.

Administration

Another social factor of no little importance is found in the sphere of administration of the service. In the case of the hospitals, it seems untidy that the teaching hospitals and the non-teaching hospitals should be separately administered, in England and Wales, by boards of governors and regional hospital Boards respectively. There seems no doubt in addition that this separation has aggravated the disparity between the two groups of hospitals in terms of function. The teaching hospitals have tended to become highly specialised research institutes into which only selected groups of patients are admitted and in which the medical staff is large and very advanced. Such hospitals are clearly not the best places for educating undergraduates in general medicine and surgery. The regional board hospitals on the other hand, while vastly improved compared with the days before 1948, and better staffed than then, admit all sorts of patients and so are highly suitable for undergraduate medical education. But they have neither the numbers of staff nor the other facilities required for teaching purposes. The possession by the teaching hospitals of private funds, sometimes very large, also inclines to enable them to skate round the social responsibility they may well be thought to bear towards the districts in which they stand. They do not have to conform to the needs of the people, in the last resort—not that they are always flouting those needs. It would surely be better in almost every way to follow the example of Scotland and have all hospitals under one control, even though there might be rather a heavy representation of teaching hospital representatives on the controlling bodies.

The composition of the controlling bodies is another matter we should look at, as is their responsibility. To take the second first, they are responsible to the Minister of Health, who appoints their members after hearing representations from various quarters (and no doubt not hearing them from others). The members are not elected; that goes without saying; but what is almost as important is that they are not allowed to consider themselves as representing any organisation or section of the people.

So a trades council may nominate somebody for membership of a regional board, but if he is elected he has strictly speaking nothing to do with his nominators. Probably, if it were desired to have regional boards elected, it would be necessary to have a wholesale re-organisation of local government. Short of that, it would surely be possible to legislate that boards should include representatives of local authorities at least, and that such representatives should be entitled to bring mandates from their sponsoring bodies before the meetings of the board.

The political composition of regional boards and boards of governors is another subject for comment. It is common knowledge that in 1948 and the years immediately following there was quite a significant proportion of left wing members, and it is also well known that they are now very few. It was not that they changed their political views. Their terms of office came to an end, and were not renewed. This has certainly made it easier for the Tories to whittle away with "economies" as well as press through the charges on prescriptions and teeth and spectacles.

It would have been surprising, of course, if some such weeding-out had not taken place. Perhaps it is also a little surprising that it has not been exhaustive. It may be that the Ministry recognises real ability

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when it sees it, even in left wingers, and is content to make use of it. And perhaps that is not unreasonable. On the other side of the penny, it must be admitted that quite a number of Tory members of boards and management committees are very able people who really know what they are doing, and do it well, with genuine care for the good of the service. For all that, it must be true that a better job still would be done by an equal number of equally capable and experienced Socialists, just because of the basic difference in outlook. There is no doubt that such people exist—lacking perhaps only in experience, simply because they have not been put on the boards. There we have another reason, if one were needed, to bewail the recent Tory victory at the polls.

Staffing the Service

A social factor of rather a different sort concerns the staffing of the health service. Two aspects are prominent. Firstly there is the question of the separation between the staffs of the hospitals on one hand and the general practitioners on the other. This has arisen partly from the fact that the N.H.S. permitted more complete medical staffing of hospitals, so that the G.P.s no longer had much to do with hospital work. But more important has been the growth of scientific medicine, with its dependence on the laboratory, the X-ray department, the pharmacy, the physiotherapy department, and so on. The G.P.s simply could not do this sort of thing, and perforce have to send many patients off to hospital. The patients may come back under their care again for a shorter or longer period; but in many cases there is a tendency to become more and more a patient of the hospital, and less and less a patient of the G.P. This naturally fosters the idea that the G.P. is not really quite such a good doctor as a hospital doctor; whereas really there are good, bad and indifferent of both kinds. The major matter is that the hospital doctor has one kind of job to do, the general practitioner another, and of the two of them the hospital doctor has been better looked after by the N.H.S. The proportion of the cost of the N.H.S. going to general practice over the years has fallen slightly, that going to the hospitals has risen; and the remedy is obvious.

The other aspect of staffing is at present almost confined to the hospitals. It is the increasingly obvious fact that it takes more than doctors and nurses to run a health service. The laboratory technicians, radiographers, physiotherapists, pharmacists, electrocardiographers, clerical workers, almoners and administrators, and in less degree the porters and maintenance workers, are growing more and more conscious of their essential roles. This has two outstanding corollaries: first, that they are no longer content to kowtow to the doctors (who, for their part, less and less expect such treatment); and second, that they fail to see why they should tolerate such low pay as the N.H.S. offers when they can so often do better in industry or business or in some fashionable nursing home. And so the N.H.S. is chronically short of these essential workers, and will not fully flourish until the very obvious corrective steps have been taken. (Not that there are, in any case and by way of balance, enough of either doctors or nurses; nor is any nurse properly remunerated for her socially very valuable work, as could also be said of the junior medical staff.)

Looking back over these notes with a view to summing up, I find myself inclined to suggest that modern medicine in this country has been helped forward by the National Health Service, which has been a great reform within the framework of capitalism; that in the course of this reform the doctor has lost something of his social pre-eminence in the field of health and medicine, and has to a limited degree modified his class attitude; that the staff of the service as a whole is somewhat more united, or perhaps less disunited, than it was; but that the service itself will not be really comprehensive until production is undertaken for need instead of for profit, and the staff will not be really united until after the establishment of a classless society.

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Class conflict or decline

W. Gallacher

T was a lad named Pontius Pilate who put the time-honoured, but unanswered question, to the God-man (not the Dalai Lama): "What is truth?" The short and simple answer is, of course, truth is what is true. That, you may say, is answering one problem by presenting another.

Well, let us consider this. The ancient Greek philosophers sought to get at what was true by the method of dialogue. What might be called the search for truth through contradiction. One put forward a proposition, another contradicted it, and out of the ensuing discussion a new value in the search for truth emerged. That, at any rate, was the idea. And talking about the idea brings us to Hegel.

Hegel was attracted by this method of the dialogue and he saw it, as he believed, operating in the realm of human progress. Ideas, he contended, generally accepted as expressing what was going on, in nature as in human society, sooner or later were challenged by opposing ideas. Out of the conflict of the new and the old, the unity of opposites, came something different from both but containing values peculiar to each.

Marx, in turn, was attracted to the importance of dialectic as presented by Hegel, but was quick to realise that ideas didn't come out of the void. Ideas were, and only could be, generated by natural phenomena of which man and his associations were part. So he applied the dialectic to natural phenomena and gave us dialectical materialism.

It may be of interest to note here that the ancient prophet Isaiah did a bit of groping after the dialectic. In his day the limit of our sight upward, what may be termed our "vertical horizon", was looked on as a firmament—the roof of the earth and the floor of heaven. The occupant of the top floor liked nothing better, on a pleasant Sunday evening, than to look out of the window and have a chat with one or another of his chosen people. He, like the "desiccated calculating machine" Gaitskell, and before him that dear Christian brother, William E. Gladstone, believed in the "good neighbour policy". Here he was, having a chat with Isaiah, wherein, amongst other things, he had this to say, as reported in the 45th chapter, verses 6 and 7:

"I am the Lord, and there is none else." That's straight and to the point. No nonsense here about three in one. "I am the Lord and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace and create evil: I the Lord do all these things."

So there is Isaiah trying to find an explanation of natural phenomena and the behaviour of his fellow-men, and he finds it in an invisible overlord, half god and half devil, a combination of good and evil. The unity of opposites.

The Materialist Conception of History

Marx saw that the dialectic, or progress through contradiction, applied not only to natural phenomena, but also to human society, and this enabled him, and his great collaborator Engels, to provide us with the materialist conception of history. In connection with this, Engels says in the preface of the 1888 English edition of *The Communist Manifesto*:

> "The *Manifesto* being our joint production, I consider myself bound to state that the fundamental proposition which forms its nucleus belongs to Marx. That proposition is: That in every historical epoch, the prevailing mode of economic production and exchange, and the social organisation necessary following from it, form the basis upon which is built up, and from which alone can be explained, the political and intellectual history of that epoch; that consequently the whole history of mankind (since the dissolution of primitive tribal society, holding land in common ownership) has been a history of class struggles, contests between exploiting and exploited, ruling and oppressed classes; that the history of these class struggles forms a series of evolutions in which, nowadays, a stage has been reached where the exploited and oppressed class—the proletariat—cannot attain its emancipation from the sway of the exploiting and ruling class—the bourgeoisie—without, at the same time, and once and for all, emancipating society at large from all exploitation, oppression, class distinctions and class struggles."

Attempts have been made by "disprovers" of Marxism—and there have been a legion of them,

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all sooner or later themselves disproved by events —to present Marxism as a species of fatalism. Nothing could be further from the truth, as a study of that "fundamental proposition" will show. Man is active all through the piece. Man makes a change in the mode of production and is then faced with the task of readjusting social relations to bring them into harmony with the change that has taken place.

The aristocracy of Rome, in the days of the Empire, drew tribute from many lands. This enabled them to maintain a slave system of society that ultimately led to the most appalling degeneracy and the most fearsome and disgusting orgies. The "Revolt of the Slaves" led by the great historic gladiator Spartacus, struck a heavy blow at its rotten foundations, and this was added to by continual risings on the part of the non-slave plebeians of Rome. So much was this the case, that Constantine gave up Rome and built himself a new capital in Byzantium—named after himself Constantinople.

The Empire by this time was well on towards decline. The removal of the government from Europe left that great area a prey to all who were strong enough to seize a slice for themselves. But for these there was no tribute from other lands—they had to find other means of maintaining their pomp and their mercenary armies, and the only means available were the peasants who tilled the fields. Each baron claimed the peasants in his area as his own, and so from the decline of the Roman Empire, with its slave society, came feudal society with serfdom as its basis.

In the towns, freemen and merchants formed their Guilds and worked at their respective crafts and the distribution of merchandise. The craftsmen were always considering new designs or new and simpler methods of producing the goods they were interested in, while the merchants were equally concerned with finding opportunities for extending the markets that provided them with profits and wealth.

Many long years ago I read Sismondi's *Rise of the Italian Republics*. One striking remark, above all others, has always remained with me. "The merchants of Italy", he said, "knew how to turn national disaster into public good". The meaning of that he made clear. When their feudal lord was defeated in war, that was national disaster. But he returned bankrupt and had to approach the merchants for a loan. This they were willing to provide him with, on one condition, that he signed a new charter, calculated to increase their political and economic power. This was public good.

Thus it is clear that the process of change is carried on by mankind changing or expanding the mode of production and distribution, and with every such change, great or small, seeking to adjust social relations in line with such changes.

The Church

But there was not only the rise of feudal society from the ruins of the Roman Empire; alongside of it, and as a moral and religious sanction for it, there arose the Roman Catholic Church. This Church is essentially a feudal product. Its whole construction was, and is, an exact parallel of feudal society. Every stage of feudal society, from the lord of life and death down to the toiling serfs, is to be found in the structure of the Catholic Church, with the same rigid code of obedience, imposed from top to bottom. It was God's Church, and no one must question it, and it was God who put the feudal baron in his castle and ordained the serfs to till the soil at his bidding, and no one must question that.

But despite the ruthless power of the barons and the power of eternal damnation of the Church, there were those among the serfs who were prepared to challenge the power of both. The peasants' revolts in Europe and in England are sufficient proof of that.

But a new class was rising in, and around, the towns. The merchant class, using the skill of the artisans, were transforming themselves into the early stage of capitalism. Grouping the artisans together, production took on a character that demanded an ever-widening and freeing of their markets. But to secure such marketing the power of the feudal barons had to be broken, and the innumerable tolls and taxes eliminated. The Church sanctioned feudalism and the masses followed the Church. So, before feudalism could be overthrown, the Church that gave the system its blessing had to be discredited and replaced.

Thus came the Reformation, with the overthrow of the feudal Church, as a necessary preliminary to the overthrow of the system it protected. Freedom to trade was the watchword of those who broke the power of the feudal barons, freedom of worship was the watchword of those who overthrew the Church. Every man had a right to make his fortune in his own way, every man had a right to go to hell in his own way. The Church anathematised the Reformation

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and still does, but as James Connolly pointed out, now blesses the father of the Reformation —capitalism.

But, it may be asked, how comes it that a feudal Church is able not only still to exist in capitalist society, but is actually increasing its influence while the "Free" Churches are in decline?

In the 18th and 19th centuries the Catholic Church suffered heavy blows. In every country where capitalism was advancing, "free" religion rapidly advanced, and Catholicism just as rapidly declined. By the middle of the 19th century it was about down and out in the most advanced countries in Europe, having mass support only in the more backward countries of Eastern Europe and Latin America.

Most of the literary giants of the 19th century were agnostic and all for intellectual liberalism. And it is worth noting that the Church damns such liberalism as the road that leads to Bolshevism.

Well there, in the 19th century, the Protestant Churches wielded very great influence in the life of the people, in the trade unions, and in the case of the "Nonconformist conscience", in the House of Commons.

The Basic Contradiction

Free trade required a free Church and there they were sailing along, apparently, in smooth waters. But the basic contradiction in the system was bringing a new and powerful force into existence, heralded by the publication, in 1948, of *The Communist Manifesto*. By that time, the workers, having got rid of the Combination Laws, were steadily building their trade unions to protect, and where possible advance, the interests of their members. Now Marx was setting a goal before them that he, and the disciples to follow him, would keep incessantly before them. This was one great factor that was to affect the relation between the Catholic Church and the various sections of the Protestant Church.

The other important factor was the change that was taking place in the character of capitalism. In the second half of the 19th century the individual industrialist was giving way to monopoly—the last stage of capitalism, as Lenin puts it. In the early stages of this century, the last stand was made by the political representatives of the "Industrialists". Free trade or tariff reform was hammered at from one end of the country to the other, and brought the Liberal Party a resounding victory for free trade in 1906. Two more elections and two more victories in 1910, and then on to oblivion as a great party.

Monopoly took over and the basis for Liberalism vanished—a party intended to represent the workers took its place. Free trade has no meaning for monopoly capitalism, therefore there is no particular value in "free" religion. The religious sanction of a given system must have sufficient influence over the people to make them accept the existing social relations, and the mode of production and distribution responsible for these relations as ordained by God, and therefore to be accepted on pain of eternal damnation. Where is such a religious sanction to be found? Certainly not in the scattered and competing sects of Protestantism, although some of its clergy have a sort of subconscious realisation that such influence is essential for their survival, and talk more and more of allocating special clergy for preaching the gospel to workers in the factories. There they have no influence whatever. Different altogether with the Catholic Church. It has a very great influence with its members wherever they are employed. Very early in the advance of monopoly this was recognised by the monopolists and by the Church. The monopolies, great baronies with huge financial and industrial power, as distinct from the territorial power of their feudal prototypes, see in a monopolised religion the reflection of their own system, just as the men of the Church see in monopoly capitalism a system in many respects similar to that which nurtured its early growth.

It is the only Church that can instruct its members not to vote for or associate with Communists, with the threat of excommunication and the consequent eternal damnation if this command is disobeyed, and, over a considerable proportion of politically active members, get it accepted. Thus it is a Church claiming monopoly of the Christian religion, and as intolerant of opposition as the financial monopolies which dominate the system of society it now defends.

Another, not so important, factor, but nevertheless one that had an advantage for the feudal Church is the fact that the bourgeoisie, snobbishly fawning before titles, failed to complete the bourgeois-democratic revolution, but carried over into capitalist society a whole mass of royal and aristocratic parasites. Thus the shadow of feudalism still remains, and, with even more contemptible snobbery than that of the bourgeoisie, Labour and trade union leaders clamour for this shadow of a long dead past.

Yet we are told by the Prime Minister that the class war is now obsolete. Let us look at this.

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First a simple example of the unity of opposites and the generating of ideas.

Fire and water, we are told, don't mix. They are opposites. But try mixing them. If you have a nice fire going throw a bucket of water on it, and out of the unity of opposites you get neither fire nor water, they both disappear and you get steam. Mankind early on discovered the use of fire, for softening metals and for heating purposes. But it took tens of thousands of years and a terrific advance in the mode of production before it was possible for James Watt, or any other for that matter, to get the idea of using steam as a method of propulsion.

The unity of opposites! Slave-owners and slaves, feudal barons and serfs, profit-hungry capitalists and wage-earners. Such relations inevitably involve conflict, but "the class war is now obsolete". That implies something that has recently happened. It is *now* obsolete. It wasn't obsolete in the past but now it is. That's the story Church and State must try to get across.

But if, as is admitted by this phrase, there *was* a class war, then it could only arise from a deep, fundamental contradiction that implied the unity of opposites. If it is now obsolete, then the contradiction must be solved and we must be living in a classless society. Is this the case? What was the basic contradiction of capitalist economy that gave rise to the class war? Co-operative production on the part of masses of workers, and private ownership of the goods they produced. Has that been changed? Have we now brought production and ownership into harmony—co-operative production, and co-operative, or common, ownership of the wealth produced?

Clearly we haven't, the basic contradiction is still there and will continue to give rise to other contradictions, that will only be solved by conflict. Several of these are already before us—the 40-hour week, higher living standards, higher pensions, the banning of H-bombs which, while they may appear to be of value to the bourgeoisie in the fading desire to talk from strength to the economically advancing Communist countries, have no value whatever for the working class. Then there's education, rents, and automation, and of great importance the liberation struggle of the colonial peoples. All of these engender conflict in one form or another.

Mr. Macmillan is wrong, totally wrong; he was simply giving a classic example of "the wish is father to the thought". Although it must be said that so far as Gaitskell is concerned the class war is ended. At any rate he has no intention of participating in it. The Tories openly declare that they are opposed to socialism and for the preservation of private enterprise; Gaitskell says the same thing in different language.

Labour, he says, believes in a mixed economy, there is room for public ownership and private enterprise. No Tory would object to that; they and the old Liberals were nationalising and municipalising when the Labour movement was in its infancy. Post Office, telephones, telegraphs, Admiralty yards, gas and water.

What does this "mixed economy" give us? Instead of Parliament presenting a unity of opposites it has become a unity of similarities. No conflict—a dead House, in face of the struggles going on outside. In the last Parliament the smell of death was evident. Not only the people outside but even the Members inside had lost interest in its debates. Mr. Bevan, we were told, had the mortification of speaking to almost empty benches in a rapidly mortifying House of Commons.

What to do about it? Set up a commission to examine into ways and means of applying artificial respiration? Opinions were sought from Clerks of the House, from old Members and from new. A long bulky report was prepared which received widespread notice in the press. It was all wasted time and waste paper. Not a useful suggestion of any kind was forthcoming. The unity of similarities means that there is only one party, the opposition is a fake and can never hope to put real life into its work.

What are Politics About?

If Mr. Macmillan were right, and the class war obsolete, there would be no need for two parties and long sessions of Parliament. Administration would become more important than legislation, and because the class war had faded away in Parliament, but not outside, there wasn't one serious item of legislation presented before the electorate during the recent election. What a farce it was in that respect, although in another it was very important. For, regardless of the issues, or issue, a study of the results will show that the great mass of the workers—there were, of course, defections—voted against the Tories, against the party they recognised as the party of their enemies, the capitalists and landowners. These workers haven't reached the conclusion of Macmillan about the class war.

In the election of 1951, I remember reading the report of a Press conference addressed by

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Morgan Phillips, during which he said, "If the Tories want to fight this election on the price of tea, we are ready and rarin' to go". Just fancy that! Two big parties, maintained at heavy cost, in the one case by the ruling class, in the other by the working class (with, recently, a few millionaires throwing in their quota), and they go to the expense of an election on the price of tea.

What of 1959? They didn't even have the price of tea to fight on. Only when the election campaign got going was there thrown into the arena the promise, by Gaitskell, to raise pensions by 10s. per week. Could we, or could we not, afford such an administrative change? Two big parties and that's all they had to quarrel about. All that time and all that money spent and no decision arrived at. Now a new House of Commons is meeting, and the only so-called legislation that will be presented to it will be a series of administrative changes. There cannot be anything other of any real class importance.

Of course, when they got the "Queen's Speech" prepared by the Tory Government, a wide-roving debate followed. In this, one or two Members struck a note, echoing, in a mild way, what is going on outside; they even challenged Macmillan's statement about the class war, but there was nothing real in it, for there is nothing to fight about—no real conflict, no fundamental contradiction between the parties, the only possible condition for producing a live Parliament.

When the class war is ended, when there is a classless society, then there will be no long sessions of Parliament. Members will meet to work out new forms, or modifications of old forms of administration, and then to return to their areas to see that the party there and the trade unions and management, of which they are part, put them effectively into operation.

Classless society means a society where class contradictions have been eliminated. What then of the dialectic? In the first instance the contradiction between the power the people possess and the carry-over from the old order of artificial distinctions—that of titled and non-titled can be easily dealt with—the lords and ladies will be laughed off the stage.

Higher education for all will take the place of higher education for the few. The professor, as William Morris foresaw, will be able to take a job at the bench, while the man at the bench may take a turn at lecturing in the university.

While that process is going on, the ever-increasing expansion of production and the means of production brings about a contradiction that is already manifest, not only in the socialist countries but in certain circles in the capitalist countries as well, the limitations of their surroundings in relation to the terrific power that is now at mankind's disposal.

It is no accident that the Soviet Union is ahead of America in space research. America, like Britain, concerned with maintaining the old order, has been concentrating most of its energy in devising means of destruction, and is only now, because of the lead the Soviet Union has achieved, started the process of concentrating its forces on this new and far-reaching field of endeavour. Britain hasn't even started in the race, and it's clear that America wouldn't be as far advanced as it is, but for the fear of being left far behind by the great socialist country.

Capitalist Contradictions Remain

But the dialectic favours the Soviet Union. It has eliminated the class contradictions and is rapidly advancing towards the elimination of artificial contradictions. These remain with America and with all capitalist countries. They give rise to conflict within each of these countries, and while these conflicts go on the contradiction of the limitation of their surroundings cannot assume the importance that it does in a country free from such conflict. Their means of production, and their education, technical and scientific, cannot advance at the rate that it does in a country freed from such class conflicts.

For Britain this is of first importance. A great industrial country with a working class second to none, why should we lag behind? We should be playing a major part in this amazing reaching-out towards the other planets in this mighty universe. Why have we fallen so far behind? Because our working class movement has got into the hands of a few parliamentary careerists. Instead of fighting the bourgeoisie they have toadied to them. Instead of recognising the basic contradiction, they have ignored it, and babble about "mixed economy"; instead of recognising the existence of artificial distinctions, they have become a party to them with their Labour lords, baronets and knights. Instead of studying Marx, they have banned Marx and the Marxists. Not until all this is reversed can we make real progress. We want to see the class war made obsolete, but it will only become so with the end of capitalism and the exploitation it represents. End the contradiction at the foundation of present-day society and all the conflicts that arise from it, and then and only then, will Britain take its

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place in the vanguard of the mighty new adventure that is opening up before the world of men and women.

Let the Members of Parliament realise the urgent importance of this; let them carry the class war into the House of Commons, for only by so doing will they be able to bring that ancient institution back to life.

The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution*

Max Morris

SOME time ago Dr. Bronowski startled an audience of teachers by declaring that most of them had no claim to be considered as intellectuals because they were uneducated in science. The idea seemed strange at the time. After all, intellectuals were literary folk, writers, philosophers and such like, and always had been. No one would ever have dreamed of placing an engineer among the intelligentsia—least of all the engineer himself. Pure scientists maybe—educationists have been used to a category of "border-line" cases as part of their own professional jargon—but applied scientists, definitely not.

I remember as a university student looking down, with Olympian contempt, on the engineers as rather tough brutes, and regarding my scientific friends as very clever people but ones pursuing a mysterious vocation in which I was not very interested and in which they did not try to interest me. True, I was rather puzzled by their brains; for I had been brought up in an old Scottish school in which all the best boys had studied Latin and Greek and only the C and D forms had been directed to science—or even modern languages! My puzzlement had been increased by the large number of future doctors my school had turned out. But this could be explained by parental tradition, and of course by the fact that no one really regarded medicine seriously as a science.

How out of date all this seems today. You cannot open a newspaper, let alone the "quality" journals, without the importance of science and technology being trumpeted at you from the headlines. The shortage of scientists is, we are told, the major educational problem of our time; we are lost unless we solve it. Can it be solved, and if so how?

This is in essence the theme that C. P. Snow sets himself to develop in his Cambridge Rede lecture which has deservedly attracted such widespread attention. It is not the first attempt to deal with the problem but it is certainly, in my view, the most interesting, the most stimulating and the best presented. Not that this should surprise anyone acquainted with the work of Snow, a novelist of distinction who has made an anatomical and physiological study of a section of the intelligentsia in a series of fascinating books, and a practising scientist, too. And it is no accident that politically Snow is definitely left of centre and at least objective about, or even actively sympathetic to, the new social forces developing in the contemporary world.

Two Cultures, Two Nations

To Snow the problem is one of a fundamental dichotomy in our cultural development. Our society has produced two groups of highly educated people, the "literary" folk, champions of the "traditional culture", who have assumed the mantle of intellectual leadership throughout our history, and the scientists, pure and applied, whom the intellectuals have considered as lesser breeds. Between these two groups, very often similar in social class and educational background, there is a gulf of mutual incomprehension; in fact the "two cultures" are as wide apart as Disraeli's two nations. Unless the gap is bridged, says Snow, we cannot meet the needs of today's scientific revolution, for our society will not give the priority it should to science, on which depends Britain's future place in the world. Even more, only by completely transforming our attitude to science, and so greatly increasing the numbers of scientists,

* *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution.* The Rede Lecture, 1959, by C. P. Snow, Cambridge University Press, 3s. 6d.

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can we give the help we must to the underdeveloped regions of the world; if we don't then the Russians and Chinese will. Can we do these things? Snow ends on a note of pessimism.

This, briefly, is his argument. You will see at once that it is not only an intellectual argument about our cultural situation, but a political argument about the future of Britain. Snow links culture, education and politics, which raises the whole level of his case above that of most of those who think as he does, but who have been content to discuss the mechanics and statistics of educational reform, while adding some vague aspirations about Britain's place in the world.

Let us study the argument in detail.

Snow begins by stating and illustrating from his experience the wide gap between the cultural background of the scientist and the man educated in the humanities. The intellectuals, so the scientists think, are too concerned with their inner selves, with the tragic condition of the individual; they are pessimists. Take the leading formative influences in the literary world today, Eliot, Pound, Yeats, Wyndham Lewis—all reactionary, backward looking, treating the future as though it doesn't exist. The scientist, on the other hand, though he might agree "that the individual condition of each of us is tragic", does not believe it follows from this that the social condition must be also, for science can create the material basis of well-being; it is optimistic. Though Snow does not put it like this, he is really saying that in his work a scientist must be a materialist. This is apparently what he means when he speaks of scientists having "common responses" that cut across "politics, class or religion". Their materialism makes them forward looking; they have "the future in their bones".

Narrow Specialisation

Not that Snow thinks the scientists have nothing with which to reproach themselves. Unlike Bronowski, who implied that the "intellectuals" are the illiterates of our time, he shows up the one-sidedness of the culture of scientists today. Here he speaks from an unrivalled experience, having interviewed, as a Civil Service Commissioner, a very large proportion of the younger scientists at work today. And what he found he does not like. While the "intellectual" has no conception of the beauty of the physical world, the scientist has more often than not no acquaintance with literature or art. Worse, he does not think the literature of the "traditional culture" relevant to the great moral, social or psychological problems of today.

There is a polarisation of outlook between the two groups; nor is there even a place where both can meet. And the situation is getting worse, because it is growing more pronounced among the young, especially the young scientists whose material rewards are now greater than those of their colleagues educated in the humanities. The scientist today is, in spite of the social superiority of the "intellectuals", on to a good thing, he knows it, and is taking full advantage of it.

Broadly speaking, though Snow probably overstates the case, the facts of this argument are I think correct. Educational specialisation, which he gives as the reason for the situation, has reached a higher pitch in British schools than anywhere else in the world. The grammar schools, dominated by the examination policy of the Ministry of Education and the universities, and especially of Oxford and Cambridge, have developed a situation where a pupil in the sixth form may really study only three or at most four subjects (sometimes only *two*!), all of them falling within either the natural sciences or the humanities. More, the General Certificate of Education, whose demands increasingly determine the curricula of *all* secondary schools, encourages specialisation to begin even earlier, at the Ordinary Level, normally taken by pupils at sixteen. This is because the Ministry of Education has steadily stonewalled any suggestion that the Ordinary Level should be regarded as a school leaving examination and not as a stage towards a higher examination, and because it has steadily refused to accept the suggestion, for example, of the National Union of Teachers, that there should be a slightly lower pass mark to encourage more pupils to stay on and chance their arm. As Snow correctly points out, our education system is geared to produce a small elite highly trained in one academic skill.

The recent policy statement of the Communist Party, *Higher Education in the Nuclear Age,* puts the position in not very different terms:

> "The purpose of Higher Education is not merely utilitarian—to turn out narrow specialists, scientists and technologists as cheaply as possible—nor is it purely abstract—the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake. On the contrary, universities and colleges must send out people who understand the significance of the new social, economic and technological possibilities; who have grasped the new scientific culture of the mid-twentieth century, who are able and willing to place their knowledge and skills in the service not only of the material, but also of the cultural needs of the people.
>
> "At present institutions of higher education have no such aim. Typically higher education courses in arts, sciences and technology tend towards a narrow cramming of a mass of factual material in too short a time. On the other hand, less advanced courses can be found which are

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> concerned almost entirely with practical instruction to the virtual exclusion of theoretical knowledge. A rigid separation is preserved between the arts and sciences, and between pure science and technology. The sciences themselves are too often dogmatically taught—a betrayal of the whole spirit and purpose of science. A strict division of knowledge into watertight compartments vitiates its cultural value. . . ."

The position is actually threatening to get worse. Plans have for a long time been emanating from influential sources to divide the Ordinary Level of the G.C.E. examination into two levels—one, of lesser esteem, for the "ordinary" secondary school pupil, and the other for those going on to take the Advanced Level. While, at the same time, ideas are circulating which, if put into practice, would separate the Advanced and Scholarship Levels of the General Certificate of Education into two distinct examinations: one for university entrants and the other for the rest who stay on at school after sixteen. (Will they in fact be so keen to stay on to receive a certificate which will inevitably be esteemed as second class?) If these changes are made specialisation will tend to increase still more for precisely those whose present degree of specialisation is the cause of Snow's worry. This trend of thought is nevertheless being encouraged by the "bulge" in the secondary schools, which is already beginning to create what has been described as the "eighteen plus crush" into higher education. For no official plans yet produced are big enough to absorb the numbers of would-be students who now want, and who will more and more be wanting, to enter full time higher education.

The Industrial Revolution

But while I would support Snow's argument with these points I do not think he is on as strong ground when he attempts to give reasons for what happened. Intellectuals, he argues, are natural Luddites; they have never accepted the Industrial Revolution. And since (presumably) it was the intellectual types that were then (as now) running our society, they never listened to the plea for science; so our education became crystallised in the form we know it today.

Now this is not really a satisfactory answer to a very important question: why did such a paradoxical situation develop—the growth of an industrial civilisation ruled over by an elite educated in the humanities? Why the answer is not adequate is, I think, revealed in Snow's approach to the Industrial Revolution, which he sees as the only qualitative change in social life since the discovery of agriculture; and in his view that the upper classes ignored the Industrial Revolution and left it to the control of the bourgeoisie and "clever workmen".

There is here, I feel, both an error and a confusion.

The error lies, I think, in Snow's view of the Industrial Revolution, which was bound up with the rise of the capitalist class in Britain. It was the change from feudalism to capitalism that was the qualitative change; it was this, based upon the economic advances of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, that demanded the tremendous further technological development that took place. The confusion lies in imagining that the upper classes "left" anything to the bourgeoisie and "clever workmen". On the contrary, the landed classes entered into an alliance with the bourgeoisie to create together a new ruling class, and were joined by some of the "clever workmen" who had become capitalists.

This form of development of the class struggle in Britain had important cultural consequences. For, unlike in France for example, where the sharp conflict between the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy in the late eighteenth century had an equally sharp ideological expression, the upper class alliance that developed in eighteenth century Britain (after the battles of the previous century) meant that the new ruling class largely took over many of the old cultural concepts—and educational ideas. This is not to say of course that there was *no* ideological conflict in Britain. There is plenty of evidence to the contrary. But the political outcome of the struggle in this country, with its accommodation between the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie and the retention of feudal forms (the Lords, monarchy, etc. etc.) was bound to lead to a kind of cultural compromise in which the new ruling class in effect largely absorbed the culture of the old with its pre-Industrial Revolution outlook.

It was in order to secure the power of the new ruling class that our educational system was developed in the way it was, and took the form it did. The ruling class, facing the problem of how to maintain control of the minds of the new masses being exploited in "the dark satanic mills", directed their efforts towards blunting ideologically the sharp edges of the new social system. As William Lovett, the Chartist leader, put it:

> "While a large portion of the hawks and owls of society were seeking to perpetuate that state of mental darkness most favourable to the securing of their prey, another portion, with more cunning, were for admitting a certain amount of mental glimmer to cause the multitude to walk quietly and contentedly in the paths they in their wisdom had prescribed for them."

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Thus while the working class demanded education, and expressed views on its content which would seem very modern today in their scientific and practical character, the bourgeoisie fastened on Britain an elementary school system the core of whose curriculum was religion and literacy. It was a curriculum which was strictly utilitarian at the minimum level. It was indeed education for life, for a life of labour in the service of others.

Imperialism

For the upper classes, the important thing was first to ensure their own social cohesion, which was achieved through the system of public schools. Within them the dominant trend was naturally the education of a social elite, born and now trained to lead. So the ruling classes who had the monopoly of secondary and higher education took over and developed further an educational content based on the Platonic concept of a race of leaders. This was what mattered to them in a society based on a bitter class struggle, divided into two nations. But it would also be wrong to suggest that there were not some who appreciated the educational implications for the ruling class of the technological changes, and who wanted a scientific as well as a traditional education. Why, however, did they make so little impression?

Why did the scientific and technological content of education remain so meagre? Surely because British industry could manage empirically with only a small, highly educated minority, scientific or not, so long as Britain held such a strong industrial lead over all other nations. There was no need for a broad scientific apparatus while our industry dominated the world market and built up an enormous empire. Snow, acute as his perception is of things today, seems to me curiously to misunderstand the nature of British capitalism when he says that if "our ancestors had invested talent in the Industrial Revolution instead of India we might be more soundly based now". It was *because* of the Industrial Revolution that Britain had to complete its conquest of India and add to it the Empire on which the sun never set.

Imperialism bolstered up British capitalism and gave super profits to the ruling class as well as some crumbs to the workers. There seemed no need to "invest intellectual capital" in scientific education as long as the profits of ordinary mundane capital kept rolling in.

It was not a case, therefore, of the upper classes ignoring the Industrial Revolution, but one of building up a new social system based on its profits. That was why, though the Great Exhibition showed up serious weaknesses in British industry, and in spite of the setting up of the Science and Art Department at South Kensington in the 1850's, no great progress was registered educationally in this field. The approach of the ruling classes to technical education was indicated by the ludicrous "whisky money" grant and the fact that the proceeds of the penny rate allowed for this purpose under the Technical Instruction Act of 1889 went mainly to the growing evening institutes or the grammar schools. All that was wanted, it seemed, was a bit more skill for the workers and the minimum background of theory for the middle classes. By the late nineteenth century the upper-class alliance formed earlier had become a fusion and the seal on this was set by the old type of education which had always in the past been a mark of social superiority.

Of course, by then Britain's economic position in the world had changed. But this was to have only very slowly developing repercussions on education, and especially higher education. For the higher up the education ladder you went, the more sensitive the ruling classes were towards any attempt to change the apparatus which helped to confirm their social domination. They hardly appreciated that the changing balance of economic power in the world required them to rethink educationally as well as politically. Incidentally, the answer to one of Snow's questions may be contained in an understanding of this international situation. He asks why you could, in the early nineteenth century, get an education in applied science in Germany, but not in Britain. Germany was struggling to get to the top, and needed to be more realistic in her education. Similarly, because of the vast resources of the U.S.A., the pressure was not so great there as in Germany. Britain, meanwhile, rested on its laurels.

Did the great writers of the nineteenth century fail to understand the Industrial Revolution? Here I think Snow is on very shaky ground when he suggests that, apart possibly from Ibsen in his old age, they did not appreciate the possibilities that existed for social welfare. He is wrong, for instance, in including within this generalisation William Morris, and in ignoring George Eliot. He seems to me not to be taking a complete picture of the situation, and to be overpainting one side of it.

But whether or not writers understood what was happening, some of the ruling classes had at least a dim appreciation of the change taking place. Some educational developments were set in motion. Very slowly and in piecemeal, empirical fashion, new subjects were added to the curriculum. Very painfully elementary education advanced.

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Social and economic pressure was producing a healthy growth of realistic secondary education in the higher classes of the elementary schools. But instead of encouraging this, the old ruling-class fears overcame any sense of realism, and the promising development of secondary education on modern lines was directed by the 1902 Education Act into the grammar schools modelled on the old public schools. One day the ruling classes may pull down the monuments they have metaphorically set up to honour Morant, architect of the 1902 system.

The 1902 Act, by killing the promising development of secondary education as a natural extension of the elementary school, confirmed the class system of privilege in education at the very time when international economic pressures against Britain were becoming stronger. The system was expressed in two ways: education for leadership given to the upper classes in their public schools, and denial of secondary education except to a minority of working-class children who were to be moulded in the upper-class pattern. In other words, the social ends of education under capitalism were considered to be paramount by the education thinkers and policy makers. The situation was similar in other capitalist countries, if in different degrees.

Higher education showed up this position even more in Britain. For the only avenue, in effect, to the universities was through the public and grammar schools, which not only provided the traditional curriculum, but also severely limited the number of students. Thus the British universities right up to the Second World War had less than 50,000 students, a truly extraordinary situation. What chance had such a system of producing an adequate number of arts graduates, far less people highly trained in science? Of course, there were the technical colleges; but these, regarded as they were as mainly institutions for the part-time education of working youth, were relegated to inferior status and received correspondingly inferior treatment. The tone of "proper" higher education was set by the universities, whose inadequacy in the applied sciences Snow so forcefully shows up.

* * *

The second part of the lecture deals with the scientific revolution now in progress and its international, social and political implications. Snow is naturally alarmed, as any acute observer must be, at the consequences for Britain of the present shortage of scientists and at the continuance in the new situation of the old educational attitudes which he so effectively describes. Educational specialisation has gone so far that not only is there mutual incomprehension between the arts and the science men, but even between the pure and applied scientists. The U.S.A., he feels, is coping better with the problem, though not nearly well enough. Of the three world powers the Soviet Union is coping best of all, since it is not only training far more scientists per head of population (the proportions, he says, are Britain 1; U.S.A. 1.5; U.S.S.R. 2.5), but there the gap between the two cultures is not so wide. Moreover, the Russians *believe* in education, and act upon their belief.

Here, I think, a point may very fairly be made. It is necessary, as Snow does, to point out that Russia knows how many highly educated people a country needs and of what different kinds, but it is also necessary to know *why* the Soviet Union is able to do this. It is right, in a sense, to say we must educate or decline, but it would be useful to know why the Soviet Union is not faced with the same dilemma.

The Marxist Answer

The Marxist, in trying to give an answer, would say two things. Firstly, the dichotomy between the arts and the sciences is really a reflection of the fundamental division under capitalism between mental and manual labour which is also expressed by the concept of culture for the elite and literacy for the masses. It is because, socially, capitalism must denigrate manual labour, that it inevitably produces an education that places inferior value on anything connected with it. That is why classical education was (and often still is) considered a more fitting education for a gentleman than scientific education. In its extreme form this is expressed in Britain by the old assumption, which dies hard, that the best education for the future ruler is the Oxford "Greats" course, the science courses being reserved for those who want to do specialised scientific work—something not so important socially. As long as the class division exists in society this contradiction will continue, with its cultural consequences.

Secondly, the Soviet Union is not faced with the same problem to anything like the same extent, as Snow points out. But this is because class divisions have been abolished. And in the course of creating a classless society the division between mental and manual labour has been appreciated for what it really is and serious efforts made educationally to overcome it.

This is the meaning of the present major, all-embracing reform taking place in the education of all the socialist countries, which aims to bring education "closer to life" and to link schooling

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with productive work. As a result there is no question of culture for an elite and literacy for the masses. Specialisation there will, of course, be, and to a high degree, but based on a broad general, all-round education and firmly grounded in the workaday life of the community. The Soviet Union is not only producing more scientists, it is producing more and more *fully educated people.*

It is because the Soviet Union is a socialist society, not because of any inherent superiority of the Russian people (so that they plan better) that they are succeeding where we are not. Their socialism gives them quite a different approach than we have to educational problems. When about a year ago Khrushchov was interviewed by an American on this very topic he was quick to point out that the Russians were no cleverer than any other nation, they just arranged things better.

And so can we arrange things better. For this is the crux of the question, not just educational re-thinking, important though that is. We cannot do what Snow rightly wants done, that is, break the existing pattern of education, educate more scientists and more highly educated people who understand science, without beginning to change society itself. Education cannot and will not change in isolation from the society of which it is part. The social pattern conditions the educational pattern, though education, of course, plays an active role in shaping social reforms and attitudes and can help to change society. I am not, of course, suggesting that Snow does not understand this or does not want to do it. That would be presumptuous and unwarranted. But it is fair to say that the lecture does not pose this, I think the essential, question, directly enough.

Class Education and Social Change

If the root of the matter is class society with its superstructure of a class privileged educational system, then we must see educational change as part of the social change which the working class movement demands in its fight for socialism. It is not by accident that the working class movement today demands the complete reorganisation of secondary education on the lines of the comprehensive school; and it is equally no accident that the chief opponents of the comprehensive school among educationists are to be found in the defenders not simply of the old educational structure, but of the old-fashioned curriculum that Snow denounces. Thus, only the other day Lord James, High Master of Manchester Grammar School, expressed the "fear" that "there are strong movements seeking to broaden the content of sixth-form studies in such radical ways as virtually to destroy sixth-form work as we know it".

Fundamental educational reform in both secondary school and university has been painfully slow—not through lack of people with the right ideas: my own files are full of programmes from a great variety of sources for doing what Snow and intelligent and sensitive observers like him want done. The Higher Education policy of the Communist Party, already referred to, met with a very warm response when it declared:

> "The universities hold one of the keys to school reform, both through their control of entrance requirements and through the teachers they turn out. The first step must be to broaden these requirements, so ensuring that the schools can offer a full general education, involving science and its application as its central core. All boys and girls should be educated in the methods of science, in scientific thinking, and should be given a knowledge of elementary science. All should be given some direct experience of the application of science and the use of modern techniques in industry. Such an education, embracing science, technology and the arts, will ensure that a far greater proportion go on to higher education with a grounding in the principles, methods and application of science and technology, which will be invaluable to them in the future whatever their subsequent occupation may be."

And, speaking of the universities:

> "To overcome the narrowness of present specialisation and to develop new forms of education requires above all two major changes. First, the broadening of all courses in the early years and second, a closer relation of theory to practice, to the real world of human and industrial activity. These changes will allow for the prime necessity at present—the re-interpretation of knowledge and skills in the light of their human origin and human purposes. Only in this way can a dry mass of facts be converted into an educational course which brings knowledge to life, develops skills, and clarifies their significance for humanity. Only in this way can the division between the arts and the sciences—reflecting the inferior role assigned to science and technology by a leisured ruling class—be overcome so that both can take their place as elements in the unity of knowledge."

Such ideas find widespread support today, as do the practical educational proposals made for carrying them out. What is lacking, however, is the conviction among sufficient people that the problem cannot be solved in purely educational terms, and that a social change must be set in

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motion by political action. Which is just what the Russians did and what Snow implies the Chinese are doing too.

That is why reforms like the abolition of "selection" (the greatest single educational factor which limits our supply of highly educated people) are regarded by reactionaries as so dangerous. That is why the comprehensive school, the corollary of the ending of "selection" and completely justifiable in purely educational terms, is a most controversial political as well as educational issue. For these reforms would not only open the way to real equality of opportunity in education for the working class, and so bring the end of class-privileged education, but they can only be fully and effectively carried out in a society rapidly changing in a socialist direction.

No wonder that Snow is pessimistic about his remedies. He is right to be, if he only looks at the education system and not beyond it. He is right to believe, as he appears to believe, that the West will not solve this problem, chained as it is to the antiquated "pattern". He is right in forecasting that the scientists needed to industrialise the newly liberated countries will come from the socialist half of the world, because the West cannot supply even enough for its own needs.

But he would be wrong if he imagined, and I should not think for one moment he does, that the progressive forces in England will not be able to break through, began to change society, and in the course of doing so change education.

Discussion contributions

On the General Election

Monty Johnstone

THE Tory victory in the General Election is no isolated misfortune. It is the culmination of a long process of betrayal, demoralisation and disorientation by the right-wing Labour leaders. It is (if we include the set-back of 1950) the fourth consecutive Labour defeat in a decade.

Those who can see in this no cause to re-examine Labour's official policies prove themselves politically and intellectually bankrupt. Even more pathetic are those who conclude from it that it is necessary to throw overboard even a nominal adherence to any form of nationalisation and a long-term goal of Socialism. For as since 1945 Labour has moved further and further away from the principles for which it was formed to fight, so has each consequent defeat been worse than the last.

In blaming the young people from 21-30 for their debacle, Labour leaders are in fact confessing to their utter failure to appeal to the very age-group most responsible for their great victory in 1945. The experience of six years of Labour Government has led to many young people equating Socialism with Crippsian austerity and bureaucratic capitalist nationalisation, or seeing "nothing much to choose" between Labour and Tory parties.

Labour has made no serious attempt to challenge capitalism or do more than advance an uninspiring, watered-down programme of liberal reforms. Capitalist ideas have been allowed to go unrefuted. Is it surprising then that they have taken root not only among the middle class but also among important sections of the working class?

This is less true of the older workers who experienced the sharp edge of capitalist exploitation and the dole queues before the war.

But it has affected most strongly young workers in the South and the Midlands who have grown up without experiencing the kind of struggles their parents knew.

Large numbers of them have seen material conditions improve for themselves and their families without appreciating the special factors (post-war replacement boom, rearmament, colonial exploitation, trade union strength, overtime, wives working etc.) that have led to this.

The great majority of young people are not aware of any genuine Socialist alternative to capitalism—for the very simple reason that none has ever been put to them by the great organisations of the Labour movement.

They think in terms of "getting on" under capitalism. Compared with what they hear from their parents about their young days before the war very many of them seem to be "doing all right" at a time when their families appear "never to have had it so good".

With all this has gone a blunting and in many cases an absence of class consciousness among many young working class voters and future voters.

In the course of my job I've organised recently a number of discussions among day-release apprentices and secondary school boys in the industrial

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borough of Woolwich in South-East London. What has disturbed me most has been the number of these lads (mostly 16-17-year-olds) who have indicated that, whilst their parents vote Labour, they support the Conservatives. They consider all the talk by their parents about the hungry years before the war to be "old hat".

Young People's Views

The kind of arguments that are most common from such youngsters are:

"I like the way things are at the moment and I don't want to change."

"Labour made a mess of things when they were in. The Conservatives have improved things—why risk making them worse?"

"Labour wants to nationalise industries which will only mean that they'll start going downhill like the railways."

The feeling for peace and dread of the H-bomb has not weighed strongly for Labour because its record and policy haven't seemed particularly to distinguish them from the Tories'. In the absence of a clear fighting lead from Labour, Macmillan's Summit propaganda had its effect.

Suez, Nyasaland and Hola, where Labour made its strongest clear-cut case, didn't succeed in swaying the many who have been tainted with imperialistic and chauvinistic ideas. "Well, we can't let the wogs push us around" was an all-too prevalent reaction.

In analysing de Gaulle's referendum victory in France, Maurice Thorez gave considerable weight to the effect of imperialist ideology on important sections of the French working class. We should make a great mistake to play down this influence here also —despite the very positive evidence of strong contrary trends in the Labour movement and among certain sections of youth (the students being the most vocal up to now).

I don't want to exaggerate the position. A substantial part of Britain's young workers see the Tories as representing the rich against the ordinary people. When the occasion arises they show themselves second to nobody in class spirit. This is healthy and natural.

What is alarming is that in the last decade there has been a decline in all working class youth organisations (never very large) going hand in hand with more and more young workers growing up politically disoriented, confused or apathetic to the extent of giving their support to capitalist parties or abstaining from voting.

The election results must galvanise the whole Labour movement into stopping the rot. Its great resources must be mobilised to propagate a full-blooded Socialist programme—especially directed to the young people who would hear it for the first time in their lives.

Of course it will take time to undo years of confusion and capitulation by right-wing Social Democracy. Nationalisation has become genuinely unpopular among large numbers of people because it has been understood in its distorted capitalist form. We should be kidding ourselves, and not be taken seriously, if we implied that the electorate would vote overwhelmingly for a programme of full-scale nationalisation if put before them tomorrow.

But the conclusion from this is not to run away from basic principles because they are controversial, but, as Lenin showed, to continue to put them forward and "patiently explain" them. Success will come, not by ever chasing the will-o'-the-wisp of The Floating Voter, but through standing by principles which life itself will prove correct.

Socialist Education

Basic Socialist education in a lively up-to-date style is called for to win young people in particular.

Firstly, we need to make them aware of the real prosperity which only Socialist ownership and working class power can bring in this era of automation and atomic energy. Too often we've dwelt so much on the hardships experienced by certain (often small) sections of youth and warning of a coming slump that we've been seen as painting a picture of "gloom and misery everywhere". This doesn't ring a bell because it doesn't tally with the experience of the average working class boy or girl. But when young people realise the vast potential advances that lie before them in terms of living standards, jobs, training, education, leisure, travel, sport, adventure, human relations and freedom, they will see how paltry is Tory "prosperity". They will learn, in William Morris's telling phrase, "not to be content with a little" when they could have so much.

Secondly, the Labour movement, including in the first place the trade unions, needs to make them conscious of their real position in capitalist society, give them pride in their class and lead them in struggle against the employing class.

Thirdly, far more needs to be done to combat imperialist ideology and to show the consequences of Britain's position as the centre of a world empire. We must not be backward in arousing the strong moral sense of young people in the face of crimes and oppression; but a purely humanitarian approach is not enough. The tie-up between the class enemy at home and the continuation of colonial rule must be brought out.

Lastly, the Labour movement must really highlight and consistently campaign on the question of disarmament along the lines of Khrushchov's dramatic proposals. In this peace struggle the question of eliminating H-bomb tests and banning the

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bomb, which drew so many young people into the Aldermaston marches, should occupy the central position. The Labour Party must in future be pledged, if returned to office, to cut the vast arms programme and provide the only satisfactory answer as to where the money is coming from to finance improved social services etc.

We Communists should, I think, put forward such proposals and the perspective of *The British Road to Socialism* as our contribution to the working out of a fighting policy for the whole Labour movement—united without bans and proscriptions.

At the same time we must, of course, continue our own independent campaign around them, selling more of our publications (for which most of us found such a ready reception in the General Election) and recruiting to our Party and Young Communist League so that we can reach out to far greater numbers of people.

Leonard Scott

THE capitalist class in Britain used its carefully integrated propaganda machine, incorporating the daily press, television and sound radio, to the full advantage of its anti-socialist parliamentary candidates, during the recent General Election.

The vast majority of the working class is still unaware of the monopoly of the daily press by the capitalist class. Take for example the group of newspapers controlled by Associated Newspapers Limited—*Daily Mail, Evening News, Sunday Dispatch, Weekend* and *Daily Sketch.*

The daily newspapers of this group have a combined circulation of over 4½ million copies, which bring into the capitalist coffers, excluding income from advertising, a daily income of over £46,000 from working class readers.

The daily newspapers of Beaverbrook Newspapers Limited, which controls the *Evening Standard, Daily Express* and *Sunday Express*, also have a similar-sized daily circulation which brings in approximately the same income, and the *Daily Express* with a daily circulation of over 4 million is one of the capitalists' biggest money spinners, taking second place only to the *Daily Mirror* with its circulation of over 4½ million.

It is interesting to note that all the capitalist-controlled national daily newspapers describe themselves as "Independent", with the exception of the *Daily Telegraph*, with a circulation of over 1 million, which classifies itself as "Conservative".

The combined daily circulation of all the national daily newspapers reached the colossal figure of over 17 million, and the total income from daily sales alone averages the fantastic figure of over £177,000. To obtain an exact figure, one would also have to take into account the extensive anti-nationalisation advertising campaign of the vested interests, which should also have paid fat dividends to newspaper shareholders.

How are the attacks on trade unions and socialist policies which appeared daily in the capitalist press during the recent election campaign to be countered, when the Labour Party with its backing of millions of trade unionists allows its interests in the *Daily Herald*, with a daily circulation of over 1½ million, to slip through its fingers, and yet still permits the *Daily Herald* to be described as the only daily newspaper which speaks for Labour?

It is worth noting that as far back as 1949, the Labour Party at its Annual Conference emphasised that "the full weight of the opposition press was thrown against us [the Labour Party] during these elections. Without the *Daily Herald* the Party would have been powerless to reply effectively to the daily avalanche of attacks, misrepresentations and 'stunts' which filled the anti-Labour papers during the election period".

The "Daily Worker"

Now that the Labour movement has to rely on the whims and fancies of Odhams Press as to what will and what will not appear in print in the *Daily Herald*, the role of the *Daily Worker* is today more important than at any time in its history.

For both before and during the General Election period the only national daily newspaper giving the working class up-to-date political reports and advocating a socialist policy was the *Daily Worker.*

A rapid increase in the circulation of the *Daily Worker* is therefore essential, to convey to the working class socialist consciousness of the class struggle, and how only the Communist Party has the right policy for the building of Socialism, based on the principles of revolutionary Marxism, which can transform Britain into a proletarian dictatorship.

The trade unions can and must play a much greater role in the distribution of socialist literature to their members. Most unions have a monthly magazine, but in the majority of cases these are not used to their full advantage in the education of trade unionists politically. Few give apprentices and young people entering industry a sound idea of how the trade union movement in Britain has fought battle after battle against capitalist reaction, and that the battle for decent wages and conditions is not yet over.

The rapid circulation of news-sheets by trade unions to all members could do much to counter the effect of capitalist propaganda, particularly during disputes and strikes.

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Television

On both the B.B.C. and Commercial Television services, the anti-socialist bias is pronounced in televised plays, films and talks. That both programmes should use filmed material produced in the U.S.A., of a decidedly anti-Soviet nature, in preference to British productions on home affairs is understandable, when we consider that these imported products have been specially made and produced for the capitalist propaganda machine, and are therefore considered ideally suitable, regardless of their fundamental weaknesses, in plot, script, and setting.

That the October General Election can be called the Television Election is true to a point, and we can only conjecture what would have been the effect on the Communist vote if the Communist candidates had had equal facilities made available to them, as did the Tory, Labour and Liberal candidates.

The use of television as a free publicity spotlight for future Tory and Liberal Parliamentary candidates was also a carefully thought out action by the capitalist class, planned well in advance to enable the full value to be obtained through this new propaganda medium.

The policy of these two propaganda organs will remain unchanged, unless through mass political pressure a change of attitude can be achieved.

The daily quotations of statements by Tory spokesmen, big business and employers' federations were used to the full extent to enhance the Tory claim that "you have never had it so good", and were perhaps a greater contribution to capitalist success in the election than any other factor.

Trade unions and shop stewards are the common whipping boys, hauled on to the screens at regular intervals, as wicked examples of the restrictive trade practices hampering the "freedom" of the working class, and in the coming months we shall be seeing an all-out campaign against the trade union movement whipped into a frenzy.

It is time the trade union movement co-operated in making its own films for television, on trade union activities, recruiting, elections, and aims. Too little attention has been paid to the use of the television medium for putting over to the working class the true facts about the trade union movement, after the misrepresentations and innuendoes of the capitalist class during the past years. Considering the context of these various organs it is apparent that the attacks of the capitalist propaganda machine are centred against the trade unions, and through them at all progressive socialist principles and theory.

On sound radio the calculated omissions made by the B.B.C., in its news and relatively few educational broadcasts, play their full part in the capitalist propaganda machine. Parliamentary reports, which are cut to a minimum, are usually broadcast at off-peak listening times, the Stock Exchange reports taking prior precedence at peak hours.

"Black-Out"

The continuous "black-out" in broadcast programmes of any reference to the Communist Party, public demonstrations, the basic background to strikes, facts relating to the rapid developments in the socialist countries, and the loading of programmes with anti-socialist spokesmen, all helped to condition the working class in preparation for the General Election.

Millions of the working class listen to the daily programmes of the B.B.C., and if the Corporation continues to refuse to give a hearing to the views of trade unions and socialists, protests in a more vigorous manner must be made against the myth of "freedom of speech" which the B.B.C. continually preaches and seldom practises.

The trade union movement, as the largest organised section of the working class, can be the spearhead of the counter-attack against capitalist propaganda, or it can be its victim.

In the coming months, all trade unionists should give careful consideration to the steps to be taken as a result of the capitalist advance at the General Election. For only by conveying to the organised sections of the working class the true principles and theories of Marxism-Leninism can the objects and achievements of the vast capitalist propaganda organs be thwarted.

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Marxism Today Discussion Circles

LAST December three discussion circles on *Marxism Today* were started in London. The method and experiences of the circles may be useful to other readers wishing to start discussion groups.

Our circles arose from a recommendation by the Party District Committee which also suggested lines of guidance. Briefly the aim of the circles is to increase interest in our theoretical journal, see it as a means of stimulating ideas, promoting discussion, developing the desire for more Marxist education and personal study, and to improve the journal's sales.

The circles have about nine members each, full time Party workers and others who can meet about the middle of each month. The days and times of meetings are different for each group in order to fit in the biggest number. One member of the circle acts as convenor and chairman. The method is informal and the discussion lasts for 1½ hours. Usually, though not necessarily, the discussion centres on the main article in each issue. Members take turns to make a 15-20 minute opening of the discussion, and the member who opens makes a brief reply. The discussion is rarely limited to the article, or aimed to draw practical conclusions, though conclusions usually find expression.

The level and experience of the circle members vary a good deal and are mostly reflected in the discussion opening, where the tendencies are to either summarise the article as a whole, to pose questions aroused by reading it, or to select a few of the most salient and controversial points for discussion. The method of selecting points is probably the best, though it requires more preparation, and helps conclusions to be drawn.

When a note of sharp controversy is raised the discussion becomes very animated and stimulating. In general the members of the circles have a great deal of knowledge and a lot of varied political experience, but there is a lack of systematic grounding in Marxism, and the concept of *The British Road to Socialism* is not much in evidence in thought or a guiding factor in daily activity. Some very interesting "out of the run" ideas also find expression.

The articles which have aroused the most interest are Gollan's on G. D. H. Cole, Pollitt on the Trade Unions, Rothstein on the State and Revolution, Lilley on Higher Education in the Nuclear Age, Woddis, What after Liberation. Articles which make a vigorous Marxist polemic against non-Marxist views are most appreciated. The role of the Communist Party should always be emphasised.

So far the discussions have been confined to the political and economic articles. I have not met a desire to discuss the cultural and philosophical articles, and I think that difficulties in finding a Marxist class basis for an appraisal of such articles present a barrier.

Many useful suggestions for future articles have been prompted by the discussions. The kind of articles focus on "How to Develop the Left in the Labour Movement", "The British and Colonial People's Joint Struggle", "Growth of Monopoly in Britain and the Problems Arising for the Trade Union and Labour Movement", "Defence and Extension of Democracy", "Capitalist State Intervention in the Economy", "Soviet Aid and Trade", and historical articles dealing with vital periods in British working class history such as the General Strike, the Mond-Turner period, etc.

Some comrades feel that the journal has a role in relation to campaigns—that of political-theoretical enlightenment on the problems. It should not be used for "directive" types of articles.

It is very important for *Marxism Today* to appeal to intellectuals and specialists, but it should not give the impression of being written only for them. It should set out in a planned way to help all our active members in their daily problems. This is also necessary if we are to extend our readership to Labour movement militants and progressives, who have little understanding of Marxist ideas and expressions. To fulfil its role as a discussion journal we need to find a way to encourage more to contribute and not hold back because they feel that they do not write well.

To make a tentative summing up.

Marxism Today is a most valuable journal, and can play an important role in developing our cadre force.

The discussion circles have a useful and stimulating effect. They give much help to members heavily involved in daily activities by enabling them to exchange views and think over basic problems.

The discussion circles are not a substitute for study and basic Marxist education, but can stimulate more interest in classes and schools.

An extension of the circles would provide opportunity for many more members to exchange views, get more clarity on problems, help the sales and content of our journal. TOM DURKIN.

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